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ABSTRACT

This special subject volume of biographies of authors was created to appeal to young readers in a format they can enjoy reading and readily understand. Each entry provides at least one picture of the individual profiled, and bold-faced rubrics lead the reader to information on birth, youth, early memories, education, first jobs, marriage and family, career highlights, memorable experiences, hobbies, and honors and awards. Each of the entries ends with a list of easily accessible sources designed to lead the student to further reading on the individual. This volume profiles: Orson Scott Card; Russell Freedman; Mary Grandpre; Nikki Grimes; Dan Greenburg; Laura Hillenbrand; Stephen Hillenburg; Norton Juster; Lurlene McDaniel; and Stephanie S. Tolan. (PM)

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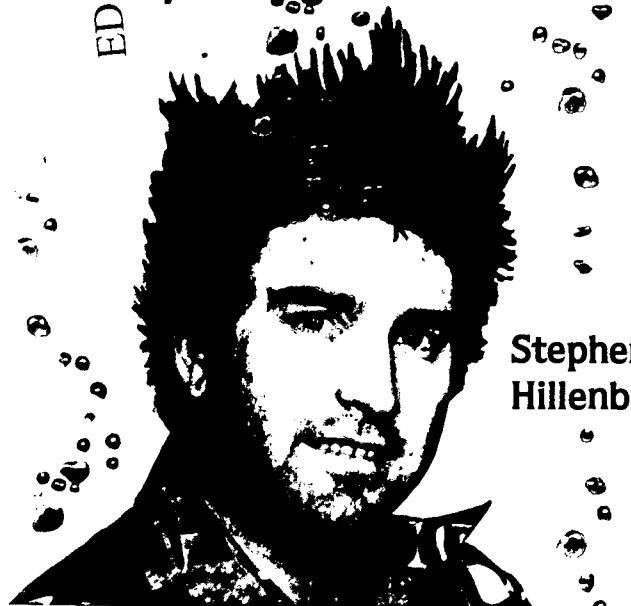
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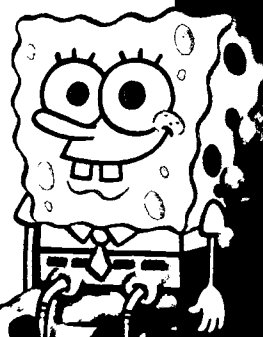
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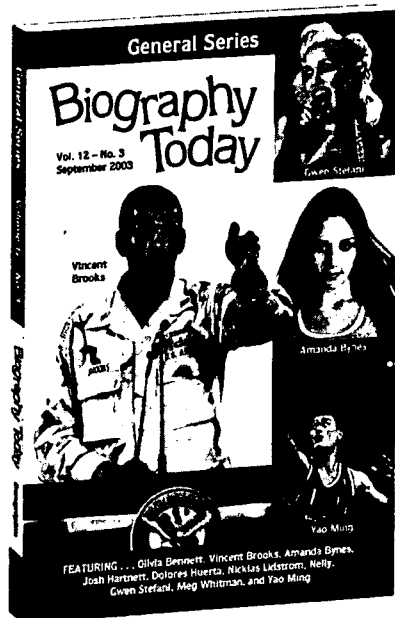
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FEATURING . . . Orson Scott Card, Russell Freedman, Mary GrandPré, Dan Greenburg, Nikki Grimes, Laura Hillenbrand, Stephen Hillenburg, Norton Juster, Lurlene McDaniel, and Stephanie S. Tolan

Biography Today

High Interest Biographies for
Today's Young Reader.



Who and Why

Biography Today features current, high-profile individuals of interest to young readers. These include authors, actors, musical performers, business and political leaders, athletes, scientists, inventors, and more — people who are making a difference right now.

At *Biography Today*, we're committed to getting the facts straight through our extensive research process. We're also committed to presenting the information in a format that's consistent and easy to read, both for enjoyment and for research.

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Biography Today

*Profiles
of People
of Interest
to Young
Readers*

Authors

Volume 14

Cherie D. Abbey
Managing Editor

Kevin Hillstrom
Editor

*Omni*graphics

615 Griswold Street • Detroit, Michigan 48226

Cherie D. Abbey, *Managing Editor*
Kevin Hillstrom, *Editor*
Laurie Hillstrom, *Staff Writer*
Barry Puckett, *Research Associate*
Allison A. Beckett and Linda Strand, *Research Assistants*

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Peter E. Ruffner, *Publisher*
Frederick G. Ruffner, Jr., *Chairman*

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Contents

Preface	5
Orson Scott Card 1951-	9
American Writer of Science Fiction and Fantasy Books, Author of <i>Ender's Game</i> , <i>Speaker for the Dead</i> , and "The Tales of Alvin Maker" Series	
Russell Freedman 1929-	31
American Author of Nearly 50 Nonfiction Books for Children, Winner of the 1988 Newbery Medal for <i>Lincoln: A Photobiography</i> , Recipient of the 1998 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award for His Body of Work	
Mary GrandPré 1954-	53
American Artist and Illustrator of the American Editions of the "Harry Potter" Series	
Dan Greenburg 1936-	70
American Writer, Author of the "Zack Files" and the "Maximum Boy" Series	
Nikki Grimes 1950-	83
American Poet and Novelist, Winner of the 2003 Coretta Scott King Award for <i>Bronx Masquerade</i>	
Laura Hillenbrand 1967-	100
American Writer, Author of the Award-Winning Nonfiction Book <i>Seabiscuit: An American Legend</i>	
Stephen Hillenburg 1961-	121
American Animator, Writer, Marine Biologist, and Creator of the Nickelodeon Animated Television Series "SpongeBob SquarePants"	

Norton Juster 1929-	136
American Writer, Architect, Professor of Design, and Author of the Children's Classic <i>The Phantom Tollbooth</i>	
Lurlene McDaniel 1944-	151
American Writer of Novels for Young Adults, Including <i>Six Months to Live</i> and <i>Don't Die, My Love</i>	
Stephanie S. Tolan 1942-	167
American Writer for Children and Young Adults, Author of <i>Surviving the Applewhites</i> , the "Great Skinner" Series, and <i>Guiding the Gifted Child</i>	
Photo and Illustration Credits	182
How to Use the Cumulative Index	185
Cumulative Index	187
(Includes Names, Occupations, Nationalities, and Ethnic and Minority Origins)	
Places of Birth Index	225
Birthday Index	237
(By Month and Day)	
The Biography Today Library	247

Preface

Welcome to the 14th volume of the **Biography Today Author Series**. We are publishing this series in response to suggestions from our readers, who want more coverage of more people in *Biography Today*. Several volumes, covering **Artists, Authors, Performing Artists, Scientists and Inventors, Sports Figures, and World Leaders**, have appeared thus far in the Subject Series. Each of these hardcover volumes is 200 pages in length and covers approximately 10 individuals of interest to readers ages 9 and above. The length and format of the entries are like those found in the regular issues of *Biography Today*, but there is **no duplication** between the regular series and the special subject volumes.

The Plan of the Work

As with the regular issues of *Biography Today*, this special subject volume on **Authors** was especially created to appeal to young readers in a format they can enjoy reading and readily understand. Each volume contains alphabetically arranged sketches. Each entry provides at least one picture of the individual profiled, and bold-faced rubrics lead the reader to information on birth, youth, early memories, education, first jobs, marriage and family, career highlights, memorable experiences, hobbies, and honors and awards. Each of the entries ends with a list of easily accessible sources designed to lead the student to further reading on the individual and a current address. Obituary entries are also included, written to provide a perspective on the individual's entire career. Obituaries are clearly marked in both the table of contents and at the beginning of the entry.

Biographies are prepared by Omnigraphics editors after extensive research, utilizing the most current materials available. Those sources that are generally available to students appear in the list of further reading at the end of the sketch.

Indexes

A new index now appears in all *Biography Today* publications. In an effort to make the index easier to use, we have combined the **Name** and **General Index** into one, called the **Cumulative Index**. This new index contains the names of all individuals who have appeared in *Biography Today* since the series began. The names appear in bold faced type, followed by the issue in

which they appeared. The Cumulative Index also contains the occupations, nationalities, and ethnic and minority origins of individuals profiled. The Cumulative Index is cumulative, including references to all individuals who have appeared in the *Biography Today* General Series and the *Biography Today* Special Subject volumes since the series began in 1992.

The Birthday Index and Places of Birth Index will continue to appear in all Special Subject volumes.

Our Advisors

This series was reviewed by an Advisory Board comprised of librarians, children's literature specialists, and reading instructors to ensure that the concept of this publication — to provide a readable and accessible biographical magazine for young readers — was on target. They evaluated the title as it developed, and their suggestions have proved invaluable. Any errors, however, are ours alone. We'd like to list the Advisory Board members, and to thank them for their efforts.

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University of Michigan School of
Information
Ann Arbor, MI

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Fort Lauderdale, FL

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Southfield, MI

Our Advisory Board stressed to us that we should not shy away from controversial or unconventional people in our profiles, and we have tried to follow their advice. The Advisory Board also mentioned that the sketches might be useful in reluctant reader and adult literacy programs, and we would value any comments librarians might have about the suitability of our magazine for those purposes.

Your Comments Are Welcome

Our goal is to be accurate and up-to-date, to give young readers information they can learn from and enjoy. Now we want to know what you think. Take a look at this issue of *Biography Today*, on approval. Write or call me with your comments. We want to provide an excellent source of biographical information for young people. Let us know how you think we're doing.

Cherie Abbey
Managing Editor, *Biography Today*
Omnigraphics, Inc.
615 Griswold Street
Detroit, MI 48226

editor@biographytoday.com
www.biographytoday.com



Orson Scott Card 1951-

American Writer of Science Fiction and Fantasy Books
Author of *Ender's Game*, *Speaker for the Dead*, and "The
Tales of Alvin Maker" Series

BIRTH

Orson Scott Card was born on August 24, 1951, in Richland, Washington. He is the son of Willard Richards Card, a teacher, and Peggy Jane Park Card, a school administrator. He has a brother, Arlen Card, who is a musician and composer.

——— “ ———

“My mother’s greatest natural talent — and she had many great talents! — was the gift of encouragement. She could make anybody feel proud of their accomplishments. And she did it without fawning or flattering — she honestly found something good and praised it warmly. Not only her children, but everybody else she has come in contact with has been helped by that gift.”

——— ” ———

YOUTH

Although he was born in the state of Washington, Card spent most of his childhood and adolescence in California and Arizona. Looking back on his early years, Card believes that his family’s strong Mormon faith played an important part in shaping his outlook on life. Mormonism is a religious movement founded in the United States in the 1820s by Joseph Smith Jr. The Mormon Church, also known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, is particularly strong in Utah and its capital city, Salt Lake City.

Card credits Mormonism with giving him a strong sense of community, and he claims that his religious background became an important foundation of his writing. In fact, he cites the *Book of Mormon*, Mormonism’s most sacred text, as a lifelong influ-

ence. “The *Book of Mormon* was probably the first adult book I read all the way through,” he said. “Much of my writing still reflects the cadence of the language in the scriptures.”

Card recalls that he had a “reasonably happy childhood” and that he always posted top grades. Although he enjoyed the company of adults, Card admits that “[I] had a harder time fitting in with kids my age. As athletics became more and more important, I became less and less involved with other boys. I found that most of my close friends were girls, because girls valued talking and were more aware of the culture and did not judge me by my athletic ability.”

Although Card struggled with football, basketball, and other popular sports, he was not afraid to go outside and skin his knees. “I loved rough and ready exploration in the creeks and woods and orchards near my home in California and wandering through the Arizona desert when my family lived there,” he stated. “I actually enjoyed physical activity, I was simply too lousy at it to make it fun to play sports with other boys. But solitary things like hiking, climbing, even shooting baskets, those I enjoyed.”

Card also spent much of his free time reading books on all sorts of subjects. "I was profoundly introverted and loved my solitary time—especially my reading time," he remembered. "It is my love of solitude and my devotion to reading that led me toward a career as a writer. . . . And yet I was also a born performer and loved to speak or sing or (later) act for audiences."

Card credits his love for literature and other creative activities to his upbringing. "I grew up surrounded by arts of all kind, and above all I lived in a family where excellent grammar was used with a high level of vocabulary," he explained. "We were all aware of the subtleties of language and we delighted in them, enjoying each other's wit and forming a community of raconteurs [skillful storytellers] that I have rarely found matched outside my own family."

Looking back on his childhood, Card notes that both of his parents were enormously positive influences, though in very different ways. "My mother's greatest natural talent—and she had many great talents!—was the gift of encouragement," he remembered. "She could make anybody feel proud of their accomplishments. And she did it without fawning or flattering—she honestly found something good and praised it warmly. Not only her children, but everybody else she has come in contact with has been helped by that gift. My father was supportive in a different way—he was always ready to lend a hand, give a ride, build, paint, photograph . . . whatever it took to get any project finished. He was resourceful and clever in his solutions to problems, and you always knew that he would come up with a solution, so any project I undertook, my dad was there."

EDUCATION

Card attended elementary and high school in California and Arizona, and he earned his high school diploma at age 16. In 1967 he enrolled at Brigham Young University (BYU) in Salt Lake City, Utah, a college with strong ties to the Mormon Church. He interrupted his studies in 1971 to spend time working as a missionary. In the Mormon Church, male members are

——— “ ———

"My father was supportive in a different way—he was always ready to lend a hand, give a ride, build, paint, photograph . . . whatever it took to get any project finished. He was resourceful and clever in his solutions to problems, and you always knew that he would come up with a solution, so any project I undertook, my dad was there."

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generally expected to devote two years of service to the church at their own expense, usually in their early 20s. Card did his missionary work in Brazil. He came back to the United States in 1973, and in 1975 he graduated from BYU with a bachelor's degree in theater studies. He later returned to school, and in 1981 he earned a master's degree in English from the University of Utah.

BECOMING A WRITER

Card wrote dozens of plays for school and church during his years at BYU, and he continued to write plays after graduating. Working during the day as a copy editor for Brigham Young University Press, he spent many of his evenings laboring over his latest play. His passion for the theater became so great that he even founded a small theatrical group in 1975 that performed plays written by himself and other area playwrights.

Within a matter of months, however, growing financial debts convinced Card to leave the theater behind and find a new job. In 1976 he became an assistant editor for the *Ensign*, a magazine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. "My college training was primarily in theater, with an eye to becoming a director, actor, or producer," he later explained. "I fell into playwriting accidentally, took some classes in it, and also took creative writing classes, but I really didn't expect it to be a career because I didn't believe there was a way to make money as a playwright without being lucky and I didn't feel particularly lucky. I also didn't want to spend my life doing the tough slugwork you have to do, facing rejection after rejection. So while I enjoyed writing plays for the Mormon audience in college, I thought my editorial work was what I'd do as a living until, someday (maybe when I was 45), I write something so good it would get published."

The late 1970s proved to be an immensely busy and rewarding period in Card's life. In 1977 he married Kristine Allen, with whom he eventually had five children. One year later, Card left *Ensign* to take a job writing plays based on Mormon scripture and church history for a publisher based in Ogden, Utah. He continued to pursue his education during this time as well, and in 1981 he earned a master's degree in English from the University of Utah. Finally, despite these many other demands on his time, Card also somehow managed to nurture a modest but promising career as a fiction writer.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Today, Orson Scott Card stands as one of the world's most respected and popular writers of science fiction (sci fi) and fantasy. In fact, he remains the

only author ever to have won science fiction's top two awards in two consecutive years, for *Ender's Game* (the 1985 Nebula Award and the 1986 Hugo Award) and for *Speaker for the Dead* (the 1986 Nebula and 1987 Hugo). Writing in *Science Fiction Writers*, critic Gary Westfahl attributed Card's successful career to "prodigious energy, superb storytelling skills, and a genuinely passionate voice." Indeed, these qualities are evident in almost all of Card's fiction, from the popular "Tales of Alvin Maker" series to his retellings of old fairytales and Bible stories.

Seeking a Career Writing Science Fiction

According to Card, success as a writer of fantasy and science fiction actually came fairly quickly for him. "I was a playwright for several years, and did all my horrible amateur writing for the stage," he explained. "By the time I turned to fiction, I already knew enough and had mastered enough of the fundamentals of storytelling that I sold the first story that I wrote specifically for publication. . . . I had a few missteps after that, and it took me four novels before I actually understood novel structure, [but] almost all my work was published on first submission. Thus I have no stories to tell of noble persistence in the face of rejection. I simply served my apprenticeship somewhere else."

Card chose to write science fiction in part because he enjoyed reading the genre. But he also concentrated on science fiction because its large fan base had a reputation for being receptive to new authors. "More than any other genre, science fiction thrives on new blood," Card explained. "We have to have fresh ideas and challenges to any kind of established view of the future. If we start with a consensus future, we're dead. New writers are

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"I was a playwright for several years, and did all my horrible amateur writing for the stage. By the time I turned to fiction, I already knew enough and had mastered enough of the fundamentals of storytelling that I sold the first story that I wrote specifically for publication. . . . I had a few missteps after that, and it took me four novels before I actually understood novel structure, [but] almost all my work was published on first submission. Thus I have no stories to tell of noble persistence in the face of rejection. I simply served my apprenticeship somewhere else."

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ORSON SCOTT CARD

SONGMASTER



**"Card understands
the human condition
and has things of real value
to say about it.
He tells the truth well—
ultimately the only
criterion of greatness."
—Gene Wolfe**

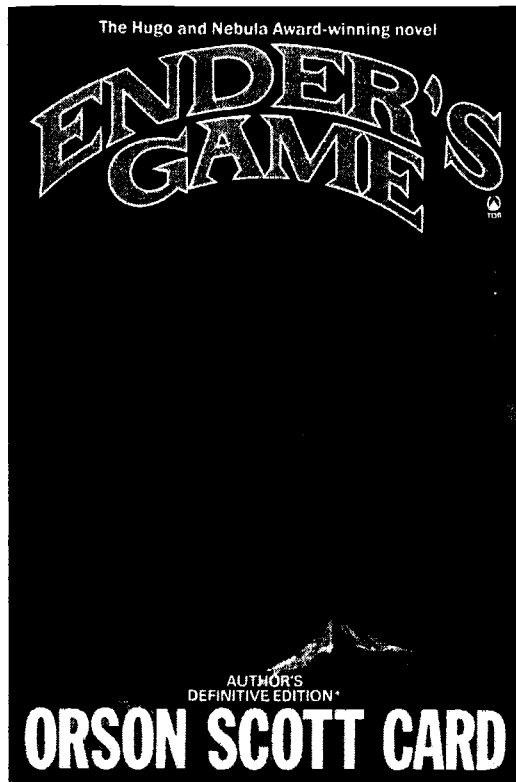
the life blood of science fiction, and the result is that science fiction readers are not skeptical of them; they're eager to discover them. I found that that worked to my benefit. The first true science fiction story I wrote ["Ender's Game"] sold and received a lot of attention."

Indeed, Card's first published science fiction story caused quite a sensation in the world of sci fi. The short story "Ender's Game" was originally published in 1977 in *Analog*, a major magazine for science fiction. This tale of a boy genius trained to defend Earth against an alien invasion was widely hailed as the work of a talented new writer. In fact, the World Science Fiction Convention gave Card its 1977 John W. Campbell Award as the year's best new writer on the strength of "Ender's Game." This short story eventually became the basis for Card's 1985 novel *Ender's Game*, one of his most famous and beloved books. "That story worked," stated Card. "It's still the most popular and most reprinted of my stories, and I still have people tell me that they like it better than the novel—though I think maybe that's because they read the story first, so they came upon it with a great sense of surprise, and the novel can never do the same thing for them."

Card also published his first books in the late 1970s, but they did not receive a great deal of popular or critical attention. His first book was the short story collection *Capitol* (published in 1978), a series of stories about the troubled population of a distant planet. Other early efforts included *Hot Sleep* (1978), *A Planet Called Treason* (1978), and *Unaccompanied Sonata and Other Stories* (1980). None of these books garnered strong sales, and some of them were criticized for being excessively violent. But in the 1979 novel *Songmaster*, Card showed glimpses of the imagination and storytelling power that have marked much of his later books. *Songmaster* told the story of a young boy named Anset whose beautiful singing voice makes him a prized slave to Mikal, the ruthless ruler of a vast interstellar empire. A reviewer for *Washington Post Book World* praised *Songmaster* as a skillfully told tale of "personal growth and exploration melded [with] interplanetary politics and court intrigue."

The "Ender's Game" Series

After publishing a fantasy called *Hart's Hope* (1983) and a historical novel about Mormonism titled *A Woman of Destiny* (1984), Card burst back into the science fiction spotlight with the 1985 novel *Ender's Game*. Based on his 1977 short story of the same name, *Ender's Game* follows the adventures of Ender Wiggin, a six-year-old genius who is seen as Earth's only hope in staving off an invasion from an alien race called the "Buggers." As the novel progresses, young Ender undergoes intensive military training so



that he can guide Earth's space fleet against the deadly and destructive alien Buggers. But Ender learns that the Buggers are not exactly what they seem.

Ender's Game proved enormously popular with science fiction readers and critics alike. The *New York Times* called the book "an affecting novel full of surprises that seem inevitable once they are explained." A contributor to the *West Coast Review of Books* praised it as "the best novel I've read in a long time. . . . Ender Wiggin is a unique creation. Orson Scott Card has created a character who deserves to be remembered with the likes of Huckleberry Finn. *Ender's Game* is that good." And the reviewer for

Booklist said that "Card has taken the venerable sci fi concepts of a superman and interstellar war against aliens and, with superb characterization, pacing, and language, combined them into a seamless story of compelling power. This is Card at the height of his very considerable powers—a major sci fi novel by any reasonable standards." In addition to earning such high praise from critics, Card's novel soon won several important awards. *Ender's Game* eventually captured both the 1985 Nebula Award and the 1986 Hugo Award, the biggest honors in the world of science fiction.

One year later, Card published a sequel to *Ender's Game* called *Speaker for the Dead*. In this novel, Ender's sorrow over his role in the destruction of most of the Bugger aliens has led him to roam the stars as a "Speaker for the Dead." As he travels through space, he studies the lives of people who have recently died. He also carries the lone surviving member of the Bugger race, a hive queen carrying thousands of eggs. Ender hopes to find a planet where he can leave the Bugger queen to repopulate the race. After 3,000 years of searching, he finally finds what he hopes will be a suitable world—Lusitania.

Speaker for the Dead proved to be another huge hit for Card. It quickly became one of the year's best-selling science fiction books, and reviewers hailed the author for his interesting characters, intriguing plot, and chal-

lenging themes. A number of critics even claimed that *Speaker for the Dead* was superior to *Ender's Game*. In *Fantasy Review*, for example, *Speaker for the Dead* was praised as "the most powerful work Card has produced. *Speaker* not only completes *Ender's Game* but transcends it." In subsequent months, *Speaker for the Dead* received both the 1986 Nebula Award and the 1987 Hugo Award. Card thus became the first writer ever to win science fiction's top awards in consecutive years—a feat that has never been duplicated.

In later years, Card returned to the world and characters he created in *Ender's Game* and *Speaker for the Dead*. His 1991 novel *Xenocide* and 1996 book *Children of the Mind* continue the story of Ender Wiggin and the other inhabitants of Lusitania. Neither of these works quite matched the popular or critical success of the first two books in the series, but they did bring Ender's adventures to a satisfying and entertaining conclusion. Card would later return to this fictional world with his later works, *Ender's Shadow*, *Shadow of the Hegemon*, *Shadow Puppets*, and *First Meetings in the Enderverse*.



The "Tales of Alvin Maker" Series

Card's first novel after *Speaker for the Dead* was *Wyrms*, a 1987 fantasy novel that follows the adventures of a teenage princess named Patience whose kingdom has been seized by a warlord. The author then cranked up a new fantasy series called the "Tales of Alvin Maker." The Alvin series takes place in the early 19th century in an alternative version of American frontier history. In Card's imaginary world, British colonists never fought for independence or formed the United States. Instead, the colonies exist side-by-side in the early 19th century with other European colonies and various Indian tribes in a world where many people possess magical powers. In fact, "spells and hexes are everywhere, as natural a part of life as the wind and the rain," observed a reader in the *West Coast Review of Books*.

ORSON SCOTT CARD



The title character — Alvin “Maker” Smith — possesses particularly potent magical abilities, for he is the seventh son of a seventh son.

The first book in the series was *Seventh Son* (1987), which introduces young Alvin and the magical frontier world in which he lives. It was warmly praised by critics and readers as an imaginative “recasting in fantasy terms of the tall tale in America,” according to *Washington Post Book World*. One year later, Card released *Red Prophet*, the second book in the series. Reviewers praised *Red Prophet* as the work of a master storyteller. For example, a contributor to the *West Coast Review of Books* stated that “Card creates episodes and images that stun with the power of their emo-

tions.” Card’s sensitive examination of the actual treatment of American Indians in *Red Prophet* drew particularly strong praise from critics.

Over the next several years Card added to the “Alvin Maker” series with *Prentice Alvin* (1989), *Alvin Journeyman* (1995), and *Heartfire* (1998), all of which have been popular with fantasy readers and critics alike. In each of these books, Card blended fantasy with an exploration of major issues in American history, such as religion, slavery, and women’s rights. “There are a lot of different things going on in the ‘Tales of Alvin Maker,’” stated Card. “One of the most important is that it’s a retelling of the spiritual life of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism. Mormons who read these books almost instantly recognize elements from Joseph Smith’s life. At the same time, I wanted to write them so that people who hadn’t the faintest idea of what was going on in that respect would still be getting 90 percent of what’s there. That’s only one of the things I’m doing. It was the reason I started writing the books, but it’s by no means the main purpose of writing them now.”

For example, after Card completed *Prentice Alvin*, the third book in the series, in 1989, he stated that “the issue that is probably most important in my fiction right now is what makes a community: what creates bonds among people, both at the micro level of the family and at the macro level

of a city or a nation; what makes people surrender a part of themselves to become a greater whole. . . . I think there's a real struggling going on between good and evil in each person, and what I'm trying to do is bring a clear understanding of what that goodness is, that it consists in large measure of the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of others within a community."

Today, the "Tales of Alvin Maker" series continues to rank as one of Card's major triumphs as a writer. The *St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers* describes the series as the "most broadly appealing of his works." It further notes that although the books contain plenty of suspense and adventure, each one also "focuses on Alvin's personal problems as a gifted young person, such as learning to get along with his family and his various teachers, to live in his society, to use his gifts for good deeds, and discovering what he should ultimately do with his life. . . . These stories also explore major American themes such as race and slavery, gender roles, religious fanaticism, and humanity's relationship with nature." Card's latest installment in the "Tales of Alvin Maker" series, called *The Crystal City*, is scheduled for publication in November 2003.

One of Sci Fi's Most Prolific Writers

In the six-year gap between *Prentice Alvin* in 1989 and *Alvin Journeyman* in 1995—the third and fourth books in the "Tales of Alvin Maker" series—Card produced a wide variety of other works.

In 1989 he wrote a popular novelization of the movie *The Abyss*. In 1992 he wrote *Lost Boys*, in which a suburban family fights to save their eight-

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"There are a lot of different things going on in the 'Tales of Alvin Maker.' One of the most important is that it's a retelling of the spiritual life of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism. Mormons who read these books almost instantly recognize elements from Joseph Smith's life. At the same time, I wanted to write them so that people who hadn't the faintest idea of what was going on in that respect would still be getting 90 percent of what's there. That's only one of the things I'm doing. It was the reason I started writing the books, but it's by no means the main purpose of writing them now."

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year-old son from a mysterious force. Two years later, he published *Lovelock*, a novel about a genetically altered monkey who chronicles the life of a brilliant scientist who is leading an expedition to colonize a distant world. *Publishers Weekly* praised *Lovelock* as "a moral fable about freedom, responsibility, and the arrogance of human beings in treating other living things as unfeeling property." During this same period, meanwhile, Card served as a writing instructor at a variety of schools and workshops, including Brigham

Young University, the University of Utah, the University of Notre Dame, and Antioch Writers' Workshop.

Card also launched another science fiction series in the early 1990s. In the "Homecoming" books, the author tapped into his Mormon faith to create a series that parallels many events described in the *Book of Mormon*. "My early science fiction stories were definitely not Mormon, since I was explicitly trying to write to 'the world' and not to 'the Church,'" Card said. "Mormon beliefs and concerns crept into my work anyway, because I'm a believing Mormon and what seems true to me is always going to be more or less consonant [in agreement] with Mormon theology as I understand it and Mormon culture as I have experienced it."

The first novel in the "Homecoming" series was *The Memory of Earth* (1992), which introduces readers to a distant planet called Harmony. For 40 million

years, the inhabitants of Harmony have been guided by a powerful computer intelligence called the Oversoul. But when the Oversoul recognizes that its ability to watch over the planet is fading, it recruits a boy named Nafai and several other citizens to return to Earth. The planet Earth had been abandoned many years before, after humanity ruined its environment, but it holds the keys to repairing the Oversoul.

The "Homecoming" series continues in the follow-up novels *The Call of Earth* (1992), *The Ships of Earth* (1994), *Earthfall* (1995), and *Earthborn* (1995).

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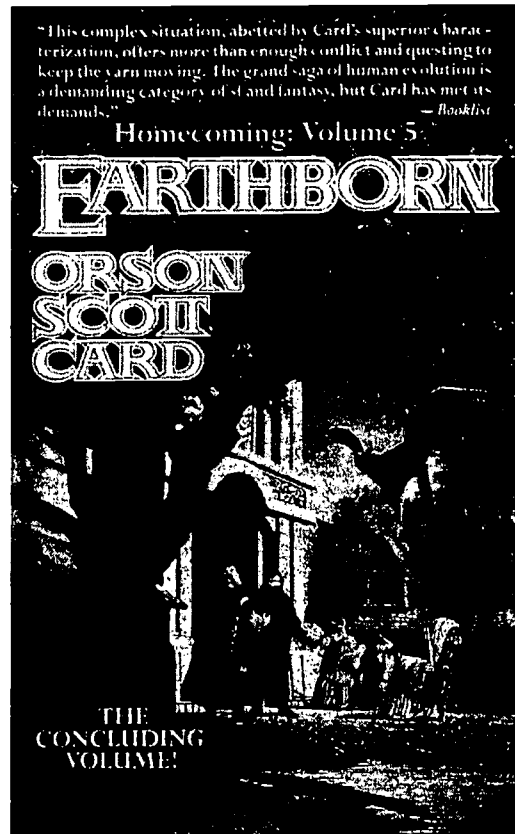
"My early science fiction stories were definitely not Mormon, since I was explicitly trying to write to 'the world' and not to 'the Church.' Mormon beliefs and concerns crept into my work anyway, because I'm a believing Mormon and what seems true to me is always going to be more or less consonant [in agreement] with Mormon theology as I understand it and Mormon culture as I have experienced it."

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As the series progresses, Nafai and his companions discover ancient starships used by their ancestors to reach Harmony, and they use these vessels to journey back to Earth. Upon arriving, however, they discover that the planet is now dominated by humanoid races descended from rats and bats. In the last book in the series, *Earthborn*, the scientist Shedemei battles to save Earth from falling once again into a cycle of warfare and self-destruction.

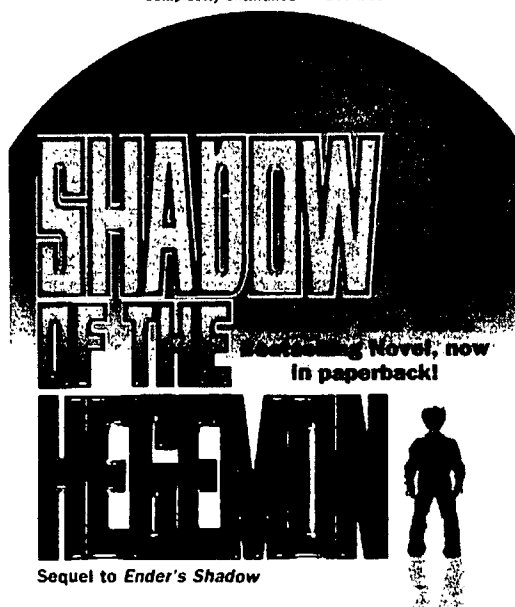
The "Homecoming" series proved popular with many science fiction critics and fans. According to *Kirkus Reviews*, "More than parable, not quite allegory, Card's far-future religious saga manages, brilliantly, to be at once entertaining, unobjectionable, and edifying." In addition, reviewers noted that the books displayed Card's usual creativity and concern with important themes. "[The series] includes alien societies, mutated rats and bats, high-tech space travel, and faster-than-light communications," observed the *St. James Guide to Science Fiction Writers*. "Yet at its core is Card's persistent theme of establishing and maintaining true human community." But other reviewers felt that the "Homecoming" series did not rank at the top of Card's efforts. "The Homecoming Saga certainly qualifies as an immensely readable story," wrote Gary Westfahl in *Science Fiction Writers*, "but these books ultimately do not seem to be as important as other Card novels because they contain no startling ideas, unforgettable images, or breathtaking novelties."

After Card wrapped up the "Homecoming" series in 1995, he turned to a novel about time travel. His 1996 book *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus* tells the story of a technologically advanced people who journey back in time to alter events associated with Christopher Columbus's famous voyage of discovery of the New World. *Pastwatch* garnered some of the best reviews of Card's long and distinguished career. *Booklist* called the novel "a superior addition to a superior body of work," noting that the book contains "a marvelous, enormously powerful portrait of Columbus himself." Westfahl, meanwhile, called *Pastwatch* "a stunning novel totally unlike anything he had written before."



ORSON SCOTT CARD

"The characterizations are first class, and the fast-paced action features one hair-raising episode after another....Readers will be completely enthralled" —*Booklist*



Returning to Ender's World

In 1999 Card decided to write a new series of books based on the world and characters he created in *Ender's Game*. The first book in the series, *Ender's Shadow* (1999), introduces readers to Bean, a child with superhuman mental abilities who befriends Ender when they are both sent to Battle School. As the novel progresses, Bean develops both his warrior abilities and his capacity to love and trust other people. *Publishers Weekly* offered praise for the novel, saying that "as always, everyone will be struck by the power of Card's children, always more and less than human, perfect yet struggling, tragic yet hopeful, wondrous and strange."

In *Shadow of the Hegemon* (2001), Bean has matured into a young man who finds himself trapped in a power struggle between two men eager to rule the world for themselves. *Publishers Weekly* commented that the book's "impeccable prose, fast pacing, and political intrigue will appeal to adult fans of spy novels, thrillers, and science fiction." *Library Journal* added that "the author's graceful storytelling and engaging cast of youthful characters add an extra dimension to an already gripping story of children caught up in world-shaking events." In 2002 Card added *Shadow Puppets*, another installment in the series. Bursting with political intrigue, suspense, and an exploration of difficult moral issues, this book also proved popular with readers and critics. *Publishers Weekly* commented that "Card discusses important topics here — the nature of the parent-child relationship; the roles of love and service — that are implicitly part of coming of age." *Library Journal* praised the author's "thoughtful storytelling and compassionately moral characters."

In 2003, Card published a slightly different type of work about Ender. *First Meetings in the Enderverse* contains a reprint of the original "Ender's World" story. In addition, it collects three other stories or novellas that explore the origins and destiny of Ender Wiggin. Critics were quick to praise this new work about Ender's universe, or the "Enderverse," as in this comment from *Booklist*: "These stories demonstrate the assured scene setting, apparently

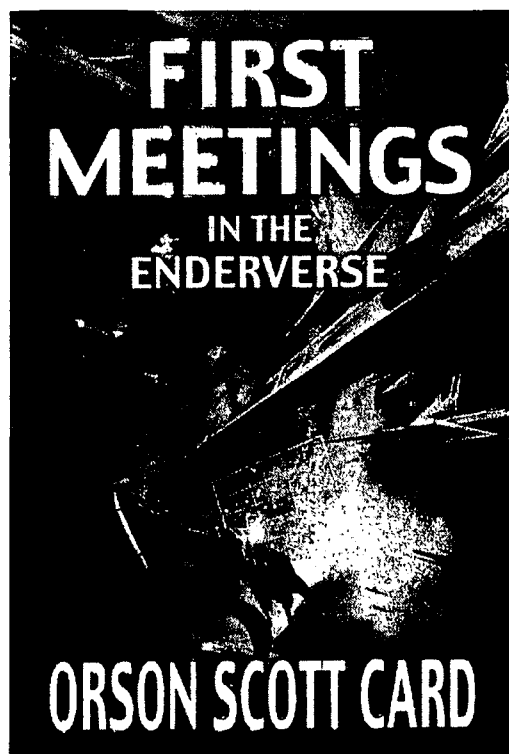
effortlessly sustained suspense, and moral preoccupation with the responsibilities of kinship and friendship that distinguishes Ender's entire saga." That reaction was echoed in this review from *Publishers Weekly*: "Even those who are intimately familiar with the concepts of the Game will be struck anew by Card's virtuosity. His powerful voice and startlingly clear vision will draw many new readers into a lifelong love of science fiction."

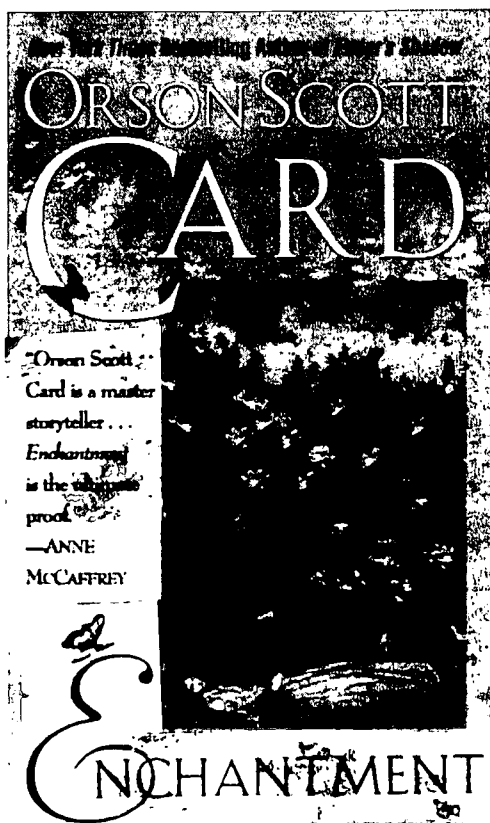
Other Recent Works

Card's vivid imagination and his varied interests have also taken him down other storytelling paths in recent years. In 1998, for example, he completed a musical called *Barefoot to Zion* at the request of the Mormon Church. Card's story, set to music composed by his brother Arlen Card, tells the story of the Mormons who settled in Utah in the 19th century. The musical was unveiled in the summer of 1998, and it attracted huge crowds throughout the state for the next several months.

One year later, Card published *Enchantment*, in which he blends the story of Sleeping Beauty with tales from Russian folklore. "Enchantment is an enthralling story," wrote high school student Laura Esslinger in the *Charleston Gazette*. "It has everything: adventure, romance, history, giant bears that are really gods and married to witches, and even a poor, misunderstood time traveler who accidentally wears girls' clothing. What more could you ask for?" Critics offered similar praise for the novel. *Booklist*, for example, declared that "in the hands of a gifted storyteller like Card, this classic tale becomes a compelling adventure."

Card has also written a number of books that retell stories from the Bible. In 1997, for example, he published *Stone Tablets*, which tells the story of Moses' difficult relations with his siblings. *Publishers Weekly* praised the novel, noting that Card "exhibits the same profound and compassionate understanding of human nature that marks his best sf and fantasy efforts." In 2000, meanwhile, he published *Sarah*, the first in a series of books about women in the Bible. According to *Publishers Weekly*, "This novel is not an





epic volume rich in cultural and historical detail about ancient Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt. Its focus is more on what Card does best: exploring human motives and relationships, and the role of faith in individual lives."

Even though Card ranks as one of the world's most popular science fiction and fantasy writers, he makes a special effort to communicate with his readers. He willingly sits down for interviews, and he has made numerous personal appearances at bookstores, science fiction conventions, and other venues in order to chat with his fans. Card also maintains two web sites that he uses to interact with fans and comment on issues that are important to him.

Hatrack River (hatrack.com) is the author's official web site. It contains a variety of information on his background, his books and stories, and other aspects of his career. In addition, Card maintains a site called The Ornerly American (ornery.org). He contributes a weekly column on current events to this site, which he describes as a place for ordinary people to engage in "serious discussion about events, ideas, leaders, candidates, parties, principles, governments, religious philosophies, and programs."

Card is also involved in a number of other activities related to his popular "Ender's Game" series. In July 2002 Card hosted the first ever EnderCon, a science fiction convention dedicated to celebrating the "Ender's Game" universe. The event was held at Utah Valley State College in Salt Lake City. That same year, the Warner Brothers movie studio announced that it had reached agreement with Wolfgang Petersen, director of *The Perfect Storm*, to bring the "Ender's Game" series to the big screen. Card has agreed to write the script for the film, and he is also developing a series of computer and video games based on the series.

ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

Card encourages young people who are thinking about pursuing a career in writing to develop their skills at an early age. "For those who are thinking of becoming writers 'when they grow up,' my advice is: Writers never

grow up, so don't wait, start now," he said. "The publishers don't care how old you are, they only care if the story is good. And since every writer has about 10,000 pages of utter drivel in them, you might as well start now so you can get a good portion of that out of your way while you're still young. After all, you learn more about writing from writing a 100,000-word manuscript than you ever will from any writing class or writing book (and I say that as teacher of writing classes and a writer of writing books)."

Card also urges high school and college students to devote most of their studies to history or science instead of English or journalism. "The goal, I tell them, is to learn everything about everything, especially about human nature and the things that people do," he explained. "Go straight to the sources and read history and biography and archeology and anthropology to learn about human behavior, and physics and biology to learn about the nature world." But he also states that it is important for young writers to read literature in their free time. "Get your own relationship with [famous] writers, like them or hate them as you will, without reference to whether they are considered 'great' by critics and academics," he said. "Also read everything ELSE, at least a sampling of every genre, because they all have something to teach you, if only to teach you some of the strange things that portions of the reading public hunger for."

Card also tells young writers not to be discouraged when they suffer setbacks such as "writer's block," in which a writer is unable to make any progress on a story. "I regard [writer's block] as my unconscious mind telling me that I'm making a gross mistake in the project I'm working on. It's not a problem, it's a blessing, and the mystery is to find out the mistake, toss out the ineffective section, and write a new version that works. This sometimes means throwing away as much as a hundred pages—sometimes more—but I have never found 'writer's

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"For those who are thinking of becoming writers 'when they grow up,' my advice is: Writers never grow up, so don't wait, start now. . . . [Since] every writer has about 10,000 pages of utter drivel in them, you might as well start now so you can get a good portion of that out of your way while you're still young. After all, you learn more about writing from writing a 100,000-word manuscript than you ever will from any writing class or writing book."

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block' to be wrong. Whenever I'm stopped on a project, it's because I was doing something false or weak, and when I get it right, it becomes more powerful and true."

Finally, Card encourages young people to write about things that really concern or fascinate them. "Do not think about what is 'popular' right now, or which kind of story is hot," he has said. "Today's hot story will be cold by the time you get your knock-off written. Instead write the stories you care about and believe in, and then when they're done, market them as best you can. There is no other way."

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MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

In 1977 Card married Kristine Allen, with whom he had five children. Two of their children are deceased. In 1997 they lost their daughter Erin Louisa, who died within a day of her birth. In 2000 they lost their son Charles Benjamin Card, who had been afflicted with cerebral palsy since his birth in 1983. Their other children are Michael, Emily, and Zina. "My priorities are first to be as good a father as I can to my children," Card states. "I try to be a good husband to my wife, a good Mormon, and after that, that's when I start trying to be a good writer, which is pretty far down the line."

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Card has a wide range of interests outside of the world of literature. "I listen to music constantly, of many kinds, by many artists," he said. "I sing whenever people will listen, I conduct a choir from time to time, I love directing amateur musicals because I can help people learn how to sing for performance." He is also an avid bike rider and movie buff, and he

has been an active member of the Utah state Democratic Party for many years.

SELECTED WRITINGS

The “Ender’s Game” Series

Ender’s Game, 1985
Speaker for the Dead, 1986
Xenocide, 1991
Children of the Mind, 1996
Ender’s Shadow, 1999
Shadow of the Hegemon, 2001
Shadow Puppets, 2002
First Meetings in the Enderverse, 2003

The “Tales of Alvin Maker” Series

Seventh Son, 1987
Red Prophet, 1988
Prentice Alvin, 1989
Alvin Journeyman, 1995
Heartfire, 1998

The “Homecoming” Series

The Memory of Earth, 1992
The Call of Earth, 1992
The Ships of Earth, 1994
Earthfall, 1995
Earthborn, 1995

The “Women of Genesis” Series

Sarah, 2000
Rebekah, 2001

Other Novels

Capitol, 1978 (short stories)
Hot Sleep, 1978
A Planet Called Treason, 1978 (revised version published as *Treason* in 1988)
Songmaster, 1979
Unaccompanied Sonata and Other Stories, 1980 (short stories)

Hart's Hope, 1983

A Woman of Destiny, 1984 (published as *Saints*, 1988)

Wyrms, 1987

The Folk of the Fringe, 1989

The Abyss, 1989 (with James Cameron)

Maps in a Mirror, 1990 (short stories)

The Worthing Saga, 1990

Lost Boys, 1992

Lovelock, 1994

Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus, 1996

Treasure Box, 1996

Stone Tablets, 1997

Homebody, 1998

Enchantment, 1999

Magic Mirror, 1999 (picture book)

Nonfiction

Character and Viewpoint, 1988

How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy, 1990

A Storyteller in Zion, 1993

HONORS AND AWARDS

John W. Campbell Memorial Award for Best New Writer (World Science Fiction Convention): 1977

Nebula Award (Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America): 1985, for *Ender's Game*; 1986, for *Speaker for the Dead*

Hugo Award (World Science Fiction Society): 1986, for *Ender's Game*; 1987, for *Speaker for the Dead*

Locus Award: 1987, *Speaker for the Dead*

Geffen Award: 1999, for *Pastwatch*

Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire: 2000, for *Heartfire*

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Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Vol. 27, 1989; Vol. 73, 1999; Vol. 102, 2002; Vol. 106, 2002

Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, 1993
Science Fiction Writers, 1999
Something About the Author, Vol. 83, 1996; Vol. 127, 2002
St. James Guide to Fantasy Writers, 1996
St. James Guide to Science Fiction Writers, 1999
St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers, 1999
Who's Who in America, 2002
World Authors 1990-1995, 1999
Writers Directory, 18th edition, 2002

Periodicals

Booklist, Dec. 1, 1995, p.586; May 15, 1998, p.1566; Mar. 1, 1999, p.103; July 1999, p.1892; July 2002, p.1796
Chicago Tribune, Mar. 2, 2001, Tempo section, p.1
Fantasy Review, Apr. 1986, p.20
Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel, Aug. 11, 1996, p.D8
Library Journal, Apr. 15, 1998, p.111; Sep. 15, 1999, p.115; Dec. 2000, p.196; Aug. 2002, p.152
Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Jan. 1980, p.35
New York Times Book Review, June 16, 1985; Oct. 18, 1987, p.36; Sep. 1, 1991, p.13; July 9, 1995, p.18
Publishers Weekly, Nov. 30, 1990, p.54; Jan. 31, 1994, p.80; June 20, 1994, p.97; Apr. 10, 1995, p.58; June 24, 1996, p.45; June 29, 1998, p.40; July 5, 1999, p.63; Sep. 11, 2000, p.71; July 15, 2002, p.59; Aug. 12, 2002, p.281
Salt Lake City Deseret News (Utah), July 3, 2002, p.C6
School Library Journal, June 2001, p.183
Science Fiction Review, Feb. 1986, p.14
Seattle Times, July 15, 1991, p.E1
Washington Post, Sep. 24, 1995, p.8
Washington Post Book World, Aug. 24, 1980, p.6; Feb. 23, 1986, p.10
West Coast Review of Books, July 1986; Number 4, 1988

Online Articles

<http://www.fictionfactor.com>
 (*Fiction Factor*, "Interview with Orson Scott Card," undated)
<http://www.hatrack.com>
 (*Hatrack River — Official Website of Orson Scott Card*, "Book Casts Spell Over this Reader," by Laura Esslinger, *Charleston Gazette*, July 15, 2000; "Orson Scott Card Interview," 1997; "Orson Scott Card Interview," undated; "Orson Scott Card's Bibliography," undated)

<http://www.writerswrite.com>

(*Writers Write: The Internet Writing Journal*, "A Conversation with Orson Scott Card," Sep. 1999)

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Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, articles from *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, 2002; *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2002; *St. James Guide to Fantasy Writers*, 2003; *St. James Guide to Science Fiction Writers*, 1996, *St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers*, 1999

ADDRESS

Orson Scott Card
Tor Books
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.hatrack.com>

<http://www.ornery.org>



Russell Freedman 1929-

American Author of Nearly 50 Nonfiction
Books for Children

Winner of the 1988 Newbery Medal for
Lincoln: A Photobiography

Recipient of the 1998 Laura Ingalls Wilder
Award for His Body of Work

BIRTH

Russell Bruce Freedman was born on October 11, 1929, in San Francisco, California. His father, Louis Freedman, was a West Coast sales representative for a large publishing company. His

mother, Irene Freedman, was an actress and a sales clerk at a San Francisco bookstore. Russell was one of two children in the family.

Russell's last name could have been Garbowitz, which was his father's name at birth. When Louis Garbowitz was 14, however, he decided that he wanted to join the military and fight in World War I. Since he was too young to enlist, he lied about his age and adopted the last name of his best friend, Freedman.

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“I had the good luck to grow up in a house filled with books and with the lively conversations of visiting authors. I knew at an early age that I wanted to be a writer, like those strange, wonderful men and women who sat at our dinner table and told stories that were always fascinating and sometimes hard to believe.”

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YOUTH

Russell Freedman grew up in a family that loved books. In fact, his parents met over a stack of best-sellers when his father paid a sales call at the bookstore where his mother was working. Whenever famous authors visited the San Francisco area, Louis Freedman always invited them home for dinner. Some of the family's guests included John Steinbeck, author of *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men*; Margaret Mitchell, author of *Gone with the Wind*; and John Masefield, the poet laureate of England. “I had the good luck to grow up in a house filled with books and with the lively conversations of visiting authors,” Russell recalled. “I knew at an early age that I wanted to be a writer, like those strange, wonderful men and women who sat at our dinner table and told stories that were always fascinating and sometimes hard to believe.”

Freedman enjoyed reading throughout his childhood. Some of his favorite books included Robert Louis Stevenson's classic adventure novel *Treasure Island* and Ernest Thompson Seton's popular nonfiction book *Wild Animals I Have Known*. “In those innocent days I didn't worry about distinctions like fiction and nonfiction. I [don't] think I knew the difference. I did know that I was thrilled by both of those books,” he noted. “What is important is that I read *Wild Animals I Have Known* with as much pleasure

and satisfaction as I have any novel or story. And I've remembered the book ever since."

Another of Freedman's favorite books was *The Story of Mankind* by Hendrik Willem Van Loon. This nonfiction book won the highest honor in children's literature, the Newbery Medal, in 1922, the first time it was ever presented. Freedman read it over the summer when he was 10 years old. He later claimed that the book contributed to his lifelong interest in history. "It was a history book, to be sure, unmistakably a book of nonfiction, yet I read it that summer not to fulfill an assignment or write a report, but because I wanted to," he recalled. "I read it for pleasure, for the thrill of discovery. I think it was the first book that gave me a sense of history as a living thing, and it kept me turning the pages as though I were reading a gripping novel."

Although Freedman spent a great deal of his spare time reading, he also pursued a number of other activities common to young boys. "We lived near San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, where I loved to ride my bike through the fog," he related. "I listened to the 'Lone Ranger' on the radio, played trombone in the school band, and collected comic books."

EDUCATION

Freedman was a good student but also a bit of a troublemaker in elementary school. His teachers often sent him to the principal's office, where he would sit under a portrait of President Abraham Lincoln to wait for his punishment. "George Washington may have been the father of our country, but Lincoln was the one who always knew when I was in trouble," he joked.

Freedman's writing talents became apparent at an early age, and he received special attention from at least one of his teachers. "I was inspired to write by my fifth-grade teacher, Miss Tennessee Kent, who looked at what I wrote in class and encouraged me to realize my dream of being a real writer," he stated. Freedman practiced his craft by writing comic strips in elementary school, mystery stories in high school, and poetry in college.

After graduating from high school in San Francisco in 1947, Freedman attended San Jose State College for two years. He then transferred to the University of California at Berkeley, from which he graduated with a bachelor's degree in English in 1951. Immediately after college, Freedman was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to fight in the Korean War. He served in combat with the Second Infantry Division in Korea from 1951 to 1953.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Russell Freedman is one of the foremost writers of nonfiction books for children. Since publishing his first book in 1961, he has written nearly 50 books on topics ranging from animal behavior to historic events to the lives of famous people. Most of his books feature historic photographs and artwork that enhance the text. Though his books are aimed at children from the fourth grade on up, they are also read and enjoyed by adults.

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“That’s where I really learned to write,” Freedman said about the Associated Press (AP). “At the AP, a story had to be clear, accurate, and to the point. You couldn’t spend all day messing around with it. I learned to organize my thoughts, respect facts, and meet deadlines.”

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Over the years, Freedman’s work has earned nearly every major award in children’s literature, including the 1988 Newbery Medal for *Lincoln: A Photobiography* and the 1998 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award for his body of work. Writing in *Horn Book*, Mary M. Burns called Freedman “an exciting writer who can make readers feel that they are witnesses to significant happenings.” In his book *Writers for Young Adults*, Richard F. Abrahamson added that “You can be sure [Freedman’s] books will be filled with interesting true stories, accurate quotations, and carefully selected photographs and prints that help make his subjects live again for today’s young adult readers.”

Stumbling into Writing Children’s Nonfiction

Upon completing his military service, Freedman secured a position in San Francisco as a reporter for the Associated Press (AP, a news organization that distributes stories to newspapers and other media). “That’s where I really learned to write,” he noted. “At the AP, a story had to be clear, accurate, and to the point. You couldn’t spend all day messing around with it. I learned to organize my thoughts, respect facts, and meet deadlines.” Although he gained valuable skills from his work as a reporter, Freedman felt that he had not yet found his true calling as a writer. In 1956 he quit his job and moved to New York City, where he accepted a position at an advertising agency. For the next four years he worked as a publicity writer for network television shows, including *Kraft Television Theater* and *Father Knows Best*. “My friends thought I had a glamorous job, but I didn’t think so,” he recalled. “I wanted to write about people and things that I cared about.”

In 1960, Freedman stumbled by accident into a career as a writer of nonfiction books for children. One day, he read an article in the *New York Times* about a 16-year-old boy who invented a Braille typewriter. He later discovered that the Braille alphabet—a system of raised dots that enables blind people to read—was invented in France by another 16-year-old boy, Louis Braille. The stories of these talented teenagers inspired Freedman to write his first book, *Teenagers Who Made History*. First published in 1961, the book was an immediate success and remained in print for 20 years.

After writing his first book, Freedman knew that he had finally figured out what he wanted to do with his life. “I hadn’t expected to become a writer of nonfiction books for children. I had wandered into the field by chance and immediately felt right at home. I couldn’t wait to get started on my next book. It was as if I had found myself—even though I hadn’t really known that I had been lost,” he explained. “I’m happy to say that I’ve been a full-time writer ever since, which is exactly what I wanted to be. One of the best things about my work is the opportunity it gives me to explore subjects that, for some reason, excite my curiosity, my enthusiasm, or my concern. Pick a subject, a good subject, and you’re sure to find kids who are interested in it.”

The next subjects Freedman tackled included biographies of author Jules Verne and inventor Thomas Alva Edison. In 1969 he published *How Animals Learn*, the first in a series of books about animal behavior. Reviewers praised the series—which eventually grew to include over 20 titles—for presenting scientific concepts in a readable manner.

Adding Photographs to His Work

In the mid-1970s Freedman was inspired to add photographs to his work. “I came upon a close-up photograph of a mother bat flying past the camera,” he recalled. “Clutching her furry chest was a scrawny, helpless baby. Its eyes were closed, and it was hanging on with its teeth and claws as its

Teenagers Who Made History



Hanging On



**HOW
ANIMALS
CARRY
THEIR
YOUNG**

**Russell
Freedman**

mother flew about, hunting for insects. She was a bat, to be sure, but the photo presented a timeless and powerful image of a mother and her infant. The photograph was an enormously affecting one because the infant's very life depended on its ability to hang on to its mother." Freedman included this photograph in his book *Hanging On: How Animals Carry Their Young*, which was published in 1977.

The following year Freedman attended an exhibit of old photographs of poor children at the New York Historical Society. "The walls of the exhibit rooms were lined with big, blown-up photos dating back to the mid-19th century showing children playing, working, going to school, in tenement apartments, and just hanging out on the New York City streets of that era," he noted. "What impressed me most of all was the way that those old photographs seemed to defy the passage of time. They were certainly of their own time, for they depicted, in their vivid details, a particular era from the past. And yet those same photographs were also timeless. They captured scenes from life that are as familiar and recognizable today as they were then, scenes that have been frozen and preserved for future generations to see."

The exhibit helped convince Freedman that photographs provided a powerful tool for communicating with young people who were raised in the era of television. He decided to tell the story of the children in the photographs—many of whom had come to the United States from other countries—in his 1980 book *Immigrant Kids*. He continued using old photographs in his future works, including *Children of the Wild West* (1983), *Cowboys of the Wild West* (1985), and *Indian Chiefs* (1987). “[Photographs are] an essential part of the story I want to tell, the information I want to convey,” Freedman explained. “Ideally, the photographs should reveal something that words alone can’t express.”

Writing about Abraham Lincoln

By the late 1980s Freedman had published more than 30 nonfiction books for children and was widely recognized as one of the leading writers in his field. In 1987 he launched a new project that was very close to his heart: a biography of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States. Freedman had been interested in Lincoln since his school days, when he sat under the former president’s portrait in the principal’s office. He was finally inspired to write about Lincoln after hearing stories about his dark and moody temperament. He wanted to uncover the truth about the great man and share it with young readers.

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“[Photographs are] an essential part of the story I want to tell, the information I want to convey. Ideally, the photographs should reveal something that words alone can’t express.”

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Freedman knew that writing a fresh and interesting book about Lincoln would be a challenge. After all, hundreds of books had already been written about the former president. In order to provide a new perspective on Lincoln’s life, Freedman conducted extensive research. First he visited a bookstore dedicated to Lincoln to get advice on what sources to use. Next he visited a number of historical sites that were important in Lincoln’s life, including his birthplace in Kentucky and the place that he was fatally shot, Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C. Along the way, Freedman examined numerous original documents, from Lincoln’s personal letters to handwritten drafts of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address. Finally, Freedman searched photographic archives to find just the right pictures to use to illustrate his work.

Freedman found writing about Lincoln to be a fascinating experience. "The more I learned about him, the more I came to appreciate his subtleties and complexities," he recalled. "The man himself turned out to be vastly more interesting than the myth. Of course, I was never able to understand him completely. I doubt if it's possible to understand anyone fully, and Lincoln was harder to figure out than most people."

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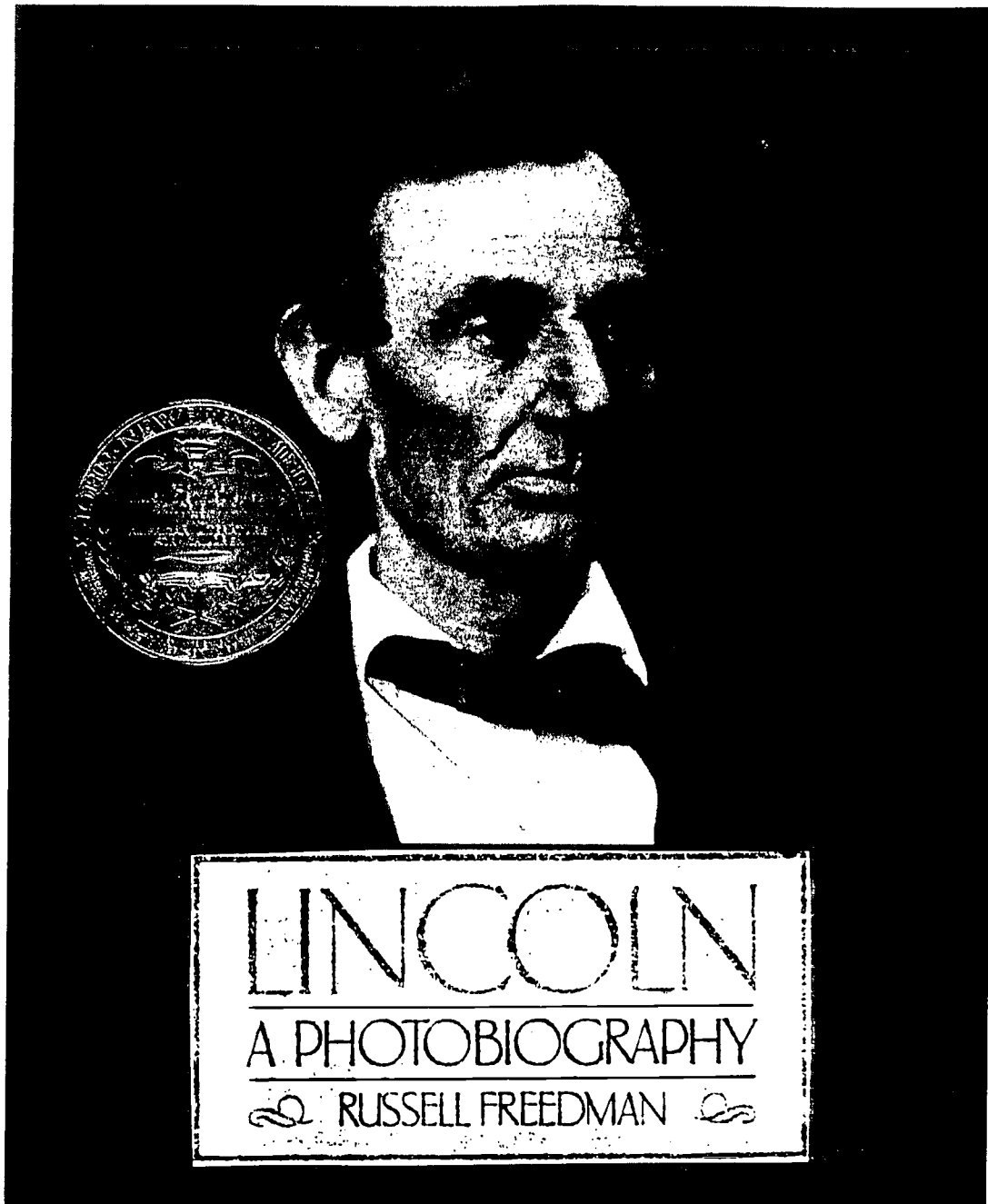
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**Winning the Newbery Medal for
*Lincoln: A Photobiography***

The results of Freedman's work were published in 1987 as *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. The text covers Lincoln's life in detail, from his birth in a log cabin to the trials of his presidency during the Civil War. The book also includes a sampler of quotations from Lincoln's writings and speeches, a list of historical sites, and more than 80 photographs. *Lincoln: A Photobiography* received glowing reviews from critics, some of whom called it Freedman's best work. "Few, if any, of the many books written for children about Lincoln can compare with Freedman's contribution," Elaine Fort Weischedel wrote in *School Library Journal*. "Well-organized and well-written, this is an outstanding example of what juvenile biography can be." A reviewer for

Booklist added that "This eminently well-researched photobiography is outstanding; the man, his times, and his contemporaries are compellingly portrayed."

Lincoln: A Photobiography received the 1988 Newbery Medal as the finest work of children's literature published that year. It became one of only a handful of nonfiction books to win the coveted prize, and the first to do so in more than 30 years. "I'm grateful to the members of this year's Newbery Committee for honoring my book and for recognizing that a work of nonfiction can be worthy of this award," Freedman said in his acceptance speech. "When I learned of their decision, I was thrilled. And I was astonished, as, I am sure, were many others who didn't expect a nonfiction book to win a Newbery Medal."



Publishing More Award-Winning Biographies

After winning the Newbery Medal for his Lincoln book, Freedman used the photobiography format for several more works about famous Americans. In 1991 he wrote about the 32nd president of the United States in *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*. In this book, Freedman shows how Roosevelt enjoyed a wealthy upbringing that left him with little understanding or concern about people less fortunate than himself. But his views changed after he contracted polio and struggled to deal with the resulting paraly-



sis. This experience helped Roosevelt overcome his prejudices and develop compassion for the plight of poor people. These feelings were reflected in his progressive social programs during the Great Depression, a period of severe financial hardship that affected the United States and many other countries around the world during the 1930s.

Once again, critics praised Freedman for bringing an important historical figure to life for young readers. "Freedman has taken a larger-than-life historical figure about whom innumerable volumes have

been written and has retold the story of one man's life in the context of his times," wrote Luann Toth in *School Library Journal*. "Even students with little or no background in American history will find this an intriguing and inspirational human portrait." Writing in *Booklist*, Hazel Rochman added that "It's the photo essay at its best: serious, uncondescending, drawing you in with the ease of a magazine article."

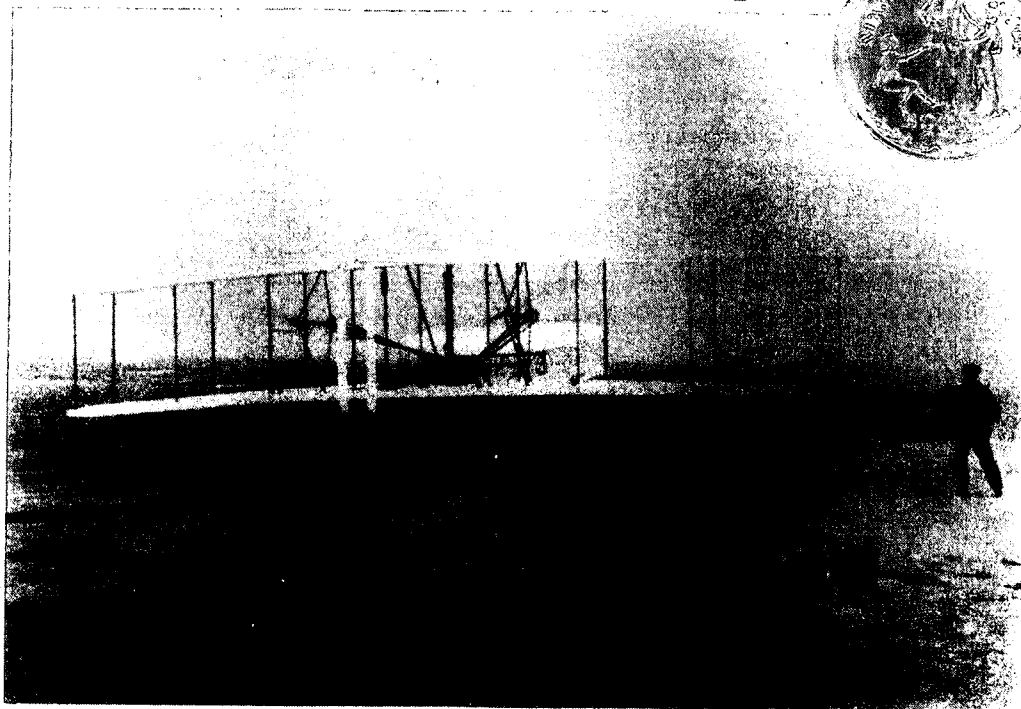
For his next book, Freedman chose to cover Orville and Wilbur Wright, the pioneering brothers who built the first working airplane in 1903. As part of his research, Freedman visited the Wright brothers' hometown of Dayton, Ohio, and saw their original airplane. This experience helped Freedman capture the mechanical secrets of the vehicle in *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane*. "The Wright brothers' great discovery—their breakthrough insight—was the realization that they could control an aircraft in flight by changing the air pressure above each wing," Freedman explained. "They accomplished that by twisting the wingtips in one direction or another. Now when I started work on *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane*, my own knowledge of aeronautics was limited to my ability to fasten a seatbelt. And at first, I found it maddeningly difficult to understand just how their wing-twisting actually worked." But Freedman was able to overcome this problem by sitting in the plane and working the controls for himself. "That unexpected hands-on experience was quite a thrill, and it proved to be an invaluable part of my research," he recalled. "It helped me understand, and explain to my readers, just how the pilot navigated that early airplane."

The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane features 94 photographs of the brothers and their inventions, including several that were taken by the subjects themselves. It won a Golden Kite Award and was selected as a runner-up for the Newbery Medal in 1992. Critics praised it as an engrossing portrait of the men and their monumental achievement. A writer for *Kirkus Reviews* claimed that the familiar story of the Wright brothers is "retold in a manner so fresh and immediate that reading it is like discovering the material for the first time." A *Publishers Weekly* reviewer called it a "vivid, superior biography" and noted that "youngsters cannot fail to come away with a heightened understanding of the Wrights' dedication to manned flight and to the painstakingly slow process of invention."

In 1993 Freedman followed up his biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt by publishing a book about his First Lady, *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery*. "While I was working on [Franklin Delano Roosevelt], Eleanor emerged as a unique and fabulous character who deserved a book of her own," the author explained. "Her story is an aspect of American social his-

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS

How They Invented the Airplane



Russell Freedman

With Original Photographs by Wilbur and Orville Wright

tory that wasn't appropriate to cover in my biography of FDR. . . . I was irresistibly drawn to her as a subject, and I had already done half the research!"

In *Eleanor Roosevelt*, Freedman describes his subject's difficult early life and her resulting dedication to social reform. He also covers Eleanor's relationship with her husband, including her reaction to his affair with his secretary. "If you're writing a biography for kids in the 1990s, you have to be honest. Kids don't have to be protected in the same way they did a generation or two ago," Freedman stated. "You can't write an honest book about either Franklin Roosevelt or Eleanor Roosevelt without mentioning Franklin's affair with Lucy Mercer, because that changed his life, and it changed Eleanor's life even more. It helped her liberate herself. It gave her permission to assert herself. It isn't fair to kids to conceal that."

Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery won a number of prestigious awards, including the Golden Kite Award and the *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Award. It was also selected as a runner-up for the Newbery Medal. "Freedman + biography = a wonderful treat, and he has done it again with his eloquent new biography of Eleanor Roosevelt," wrote Mary Jane Santos in *Voice of Youth Advocates*. "Freedman has scrupulously researched this fascinating woman and literally brought her to life on every page."

Adding to Rich Body of Work

Freedman continued to produce award-winning biographies through the late 1990s. His subjects included Crazy Horse, the Sioux Indian chief and warrior who led the resistance against U.S. forces; Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille alphabet for the blind; Martha Graham, the American dancer and choreographer who became a leading figure in modern dance; and Babe Didrikson Zaharias, the Olympic gold medalist and golfer who is widely considered the top female athlete of the 20th century.

In the early 2000s, Freedman expanded into American history for his books *Give Me Liberty! The Story of the Declaration of Independence* (2000) and *In Defense of Liberty: The Story of America's Bill of Rights* (2003). "I thought the stories behind these fundamental American documents would be interesting to readers," he said in an interview with *Biography Today Authors*. "I started with the Declaration of Independence and then went on to the Bill of Rights. I had wanted to write about the Bill of Rights for many years but was always intimidated by it. The subject has engaged me ever since I watched the McCarthy hearings on television when I was in college. [The McCarthy hearings were a series of public hearings in the early 1950s led by U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy in which a number of well-

Give Me Liberty!

*The Story
of the Declaration
of Independence*



RUSSELL
FREEDMAN

known citizens were accused of being Communists.] Writing the book gave me a chance to learn more about the subject.”

An extended trip to China inspired one of Freedman’s most ambitious biographies. *Confucius: The Golden Rule*, published in 2002, covers the life and teachings of the ancient Chinese philosopher. “Confucius is an interesting character,” Freedman noted. “This is someone who lived over 2,500 years ago and is still speaking to us. That people are still reading and repeating

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“Writing a biography is like getting to know a person. You get to know that person better than you know yourself. You study them with such intensity. You read everything there is to read about them and everything they ever said about themselves. You go to bed thinking about that person. You wake up thinking about that person.”

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what he said so long ago is something I find quite fascinating.” As usual, the work drew praise from reviewers. “This is Freedman’s first Asian subject and his work set furthest back in history,” wrote a critic for *Kirkus Reviews*, “and it is a tribute to his writing that he can make the ideas of an ancient philosopher seem so modern and fascinating to young readers.”

In 2003 Freedman completed a biography of African-American singer and civil rights activist Marian Anderson; it’s expected to be published in 2004. “Her Lincoln Memorial concert in 1939 is considered the forerunner of modern civil rights demonstrations,” he told *Biography Today Authors*. “It established the Memorial as the moral high ground for demonstrators. It was also the first mass demonstration on behalf of civil rights

and a pivotal event in the early civil rights movement. Though her personal story is inspiring, I tried not to make it a conventional biography but the story of her role in the civil rights movement.” For his next project, Freedman plans to write a biography of Marco Polo, the Venetian explorer who traveled to China in the 13th century.

Thoughts on Writing Nonfiction Books for Children

Freedman generally completes one book per year. During that period, he immerses himself in each subject, visiting historic sites and conducting painstaking photographic research. He writes the first draft of his books in longhand on pads of legal paper. Then he types the text on a computer, revising as he goes. “If I start at the first word and have to type the whole thing, I have the rhythm of the prose,” he explained. “I catch things that are missing. I see things that are in there that shouldn’t be.”

Though Freedman has published books on a variety of subjects, he enjoys writing biographies the best. “Writing a biography is like getting to know a person. You get to know that person better than you know yourself. You study them with such intensity. You read everything there is to read about

them and everything they ever said about themselves. You go to bed thinking about that person. You wake up thinking about that person," he noted. "Starting a new book is like trying to solve a puzzle. You have to decide what to include, and what to leave out, how to begin, what to emphasize and where, how to balance facts and interpretation, how to breathe life into the subject and convey your own enthusiasm to the reader. The process of viewing the material, of seeing what belongs where, is a mystery I never resolve once and for all."

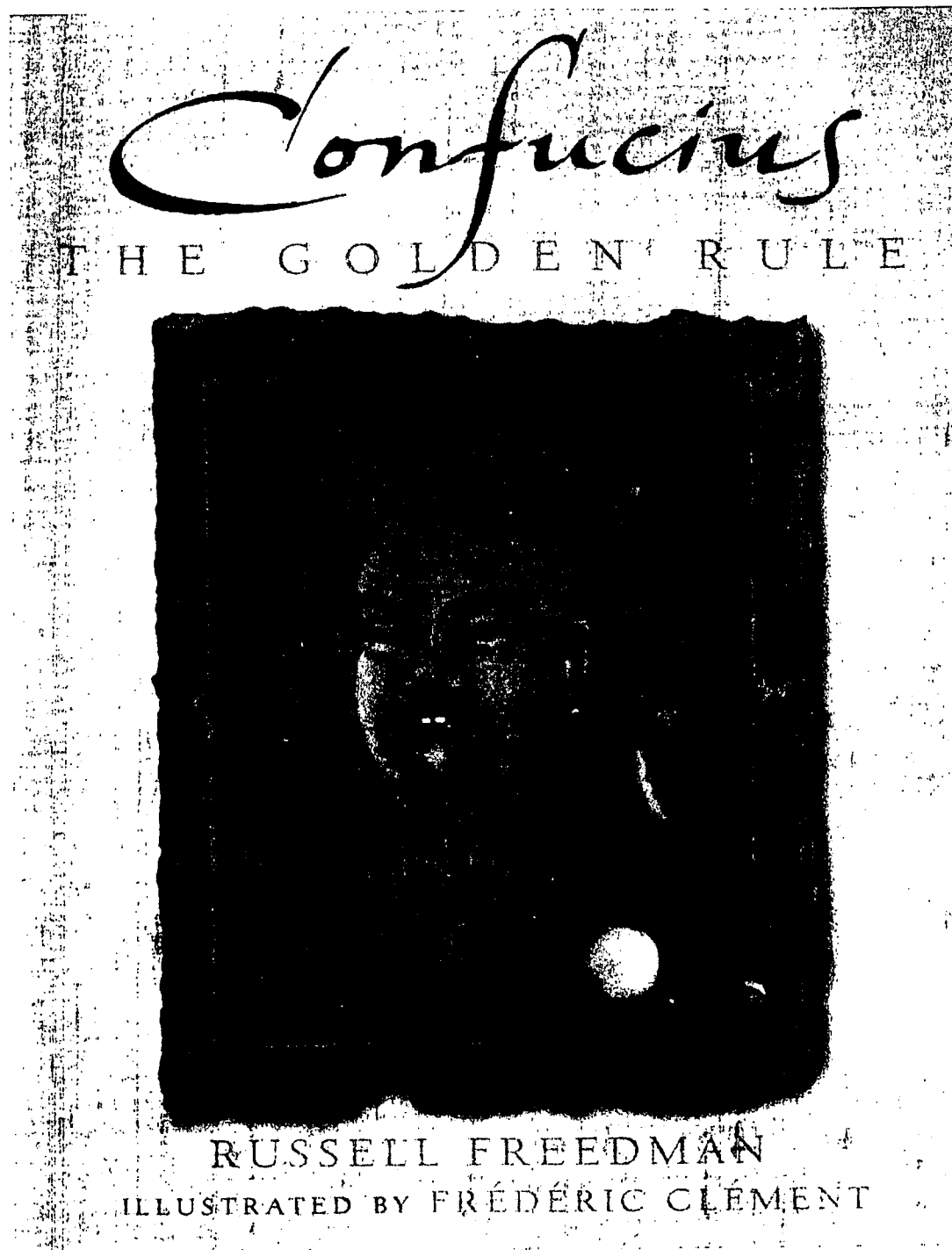
Freedman relishes the challenge of making nonfiction books accessible and enjoyable for young readers. "From a kid's point of view, classifications like fiction and nonfiction are irrelevant. A book is either absorbing and fun to read, or it's stuffy and boring," he stated. "As a writer of nonfiction, I have a pact with the reader to stick to the facts, to be as factually accurate as human frailty will allow. What I write is based on research. And yet there are many storytelling techniques that I can use without straying from the straight and narrow path of factual accuracy. Facts in a literal sense do not rule out art, imagination, or creativity. . . . Storytelling means creating vivid and believable people, places, and events—creating a convincing, meaningful, and memorable world. It means pulling the reader into that world."

Freedman particularly enjoys writing for children, because he believes that his work will have the greatest impact on this audience. "You are writing for an audience of impressionable young readers. You must keep in mind that your book may be their introduction to that particular subject, the first they have ever read. It may linger in their minds and imaginations for years, coloring their view of the past and influencing their understanding of the present. That is why a deceptively simple children's book can have an impact on the future that few adult best-sellers can match," he explained. "But beyond that, writing nonfiction

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“Starting a new book is like trying to solve a puzzle. You have to decide what to include, and what to leave out, how to begin, what to emphasize and where, how to balance facts and interpretation, how to breathe life into the subject and convey your own enthusiasm to the reader. The process of viewing the material, of seeing what belongs where, is a mystery I never resolve once and for all.”

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for children gives me, or any writer, tremendous artistic freedom. I can write about almost any subject that interests me and that I believe will interest a child. . . . A nonfiction children's book requires concision, selection, judgment, lucidity, unwavering focus, and the most artful use of language and storytelling techniques. I regard such books as a specialized and demanding art form."

Freedman's books have won nearly every major award in children's literature. Yet the author draws his greatest satisfaction from the reaction of young readers to his work. "I'm grateful for the awards I've won, but you don't write with awards in mind," he stated. "You write because you have something you want to say. If there's a secret to writing, that must be it. The most satisfying award is a letter from some kid who has been touched by one of your books." Freedman also finds the work of writing biographies satisfying in itself. "There's nothing more interesting than the story of someone's life," he said in his *Biography Today* interview. "Seeing how they live, cope, succeed, fail, and manage to get through life with some achievements helps us live our own lives. Biographies are the most fundamental stories of all."

Aspiring young writers often ask Freedman for advice on getting started. "First, read what really interests you, no matter what it is, and when you come to a passage that affects you strongly, reread it and ask yourself why," he responds. "And second, write every day. Keep a journal of your experiences. Test yourself on school assignments and letters to friends."

Freedman's ultimate goal in writing is to influence young readers the way that his favorite books influenced him in his childhood. "Whatever my subject, I always feel that I have a story to tell that is worth telling. I want to tell it as clearly and simply and effectively as I can, in a way that will stretch the reader's imagination and make that reader care," he stated. "I'm hoping to change the landscape of the reader's mind, if just a little — to leave the reader with a thought, a perception, an insight, perhaps, that she or he did not have before. . . . I want to write a book that will be read willingly, read from beginning to end with a sense of discovery and, yes, with a feeling of genuine pleasure."

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HOME AND FAMILY

Freedman, who has never been married, lives in an apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in New York City.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

When he is not writing, Freedman enjoys photography and travel. He usually takes a long trip after he finishes each book project. For example, he went to mainland China for three months after winning the Newbery Medal in 1988. Other destinations have included Australia, Europe, Indonesia, and Mexico. "Traveling to some distant place helps clear my mind and offers a fresh point of view," the author explained. "Seeing people and places for the first time gives you a chance to look at the world with the eyes of a child, to recapture some of that childish curiosity."

SELECTED WRITINGS

- Teenagers Who Made History*, 1961
Two Thousand Years of Space Travel, 1963
Jules Verne: Portrait of a Prophet, 1965
Thomas Alva Edison, 1966
Scouting with Baden-Powell, 1967
How Animals Learn, 1969 (with James E. Morriss)
Animal Instincts, 1970 (with James E. Morriss)
Animal Architects, 1971
The Brains of Animals and Men, 1972 (with James E. Morriss)
The First Days of Life, 1974
Growing Up Wild: How Young Animals Survive, 1975
Animal Fathers, 1976
Animal Games, 1976
Hanging On: How Animals Carry Their Young, 1977
How Birds Fly, 1977
Getting Born, 1978
How Animals Defend Their Young, 1978
Immigrant Kids, 1980
Tooth and Claw: A Look at Animal Weapons, 1980
They Lived with the Dinosaurs, 1980
Animal Superstars: Biggest, Strongest, Fastest, Smartest, 1981
Farm Babies, 1981
When Winter Comes, 1981
Can Bears Predict Earthquakes? Unsolved Mysteries of Animal Behavior, 1982
Killer Fish, 1982

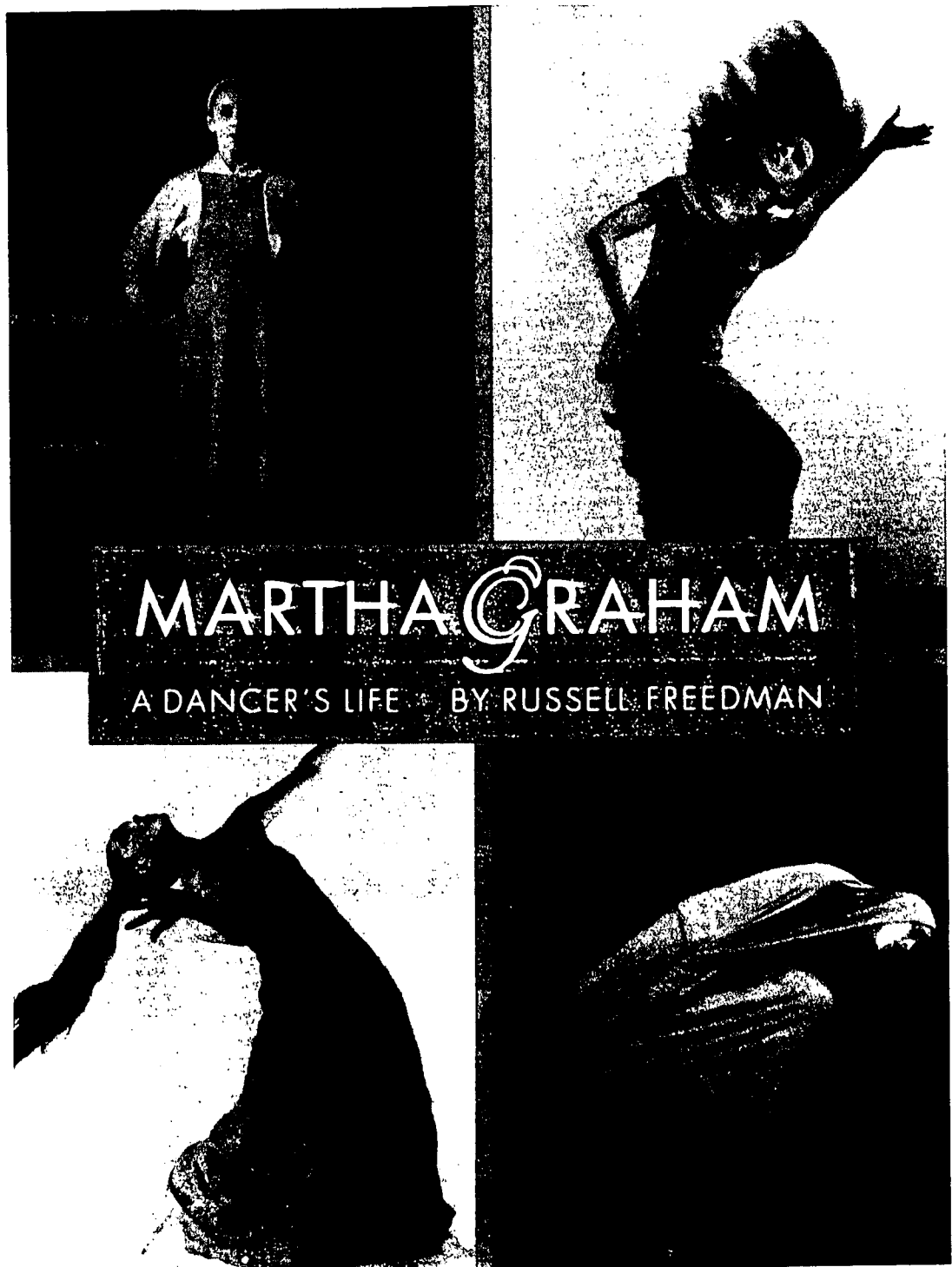
The Life and Death of CRAZY HORSE



by Russell Freedman

Drawings by Amos Bad Heart Bull

- Killer Snakes*, 1982
Children of the Wild West, 1983
Dinosaurs and Their Young, 1983
Rattlesnakes, 1984
Cowboys of the Wild West, 1985
Sharks, 1985
Indian Chiefs, 1987
Lincoln: A Photobiography, 1987
Buffalo Hunt, 1988
Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1990
The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane, 1991
An Indian Winter, 1992
Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery, 1993
Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade against Child Labor, 1994
The Life and Death of Crazy Horse, 1996
Out of Darkness: The Story of Louis Braille, 1997



Martha Graham: A Dancer's Life, 1998

Babe Didrikson Zaharias: The Making of a Champion, 1999

Give Me Liberty! The Story of the Declaration of Independence, 2000

In the Days of the Vaqueros: America's First True Cowboys, 2001

Confucius: The Golden Rule, 2002

In Defense of Liberty: The Story of America's Bill of Rights, 2003

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

- Western Heritage Award (National Cowboy Hall of Fame): 1984, for *Children of the Wild West*
- Jefferson Cup Award: 1986, for *Children of the Wild West*; 1988, for *Lincoln: A Photobiography*; 1991, for *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane*
- Newbery Medal (American Library Association): 1988, for *Lincoln: A Photobiography*
- Orbus Pictus Award (National Council of Teachers of English): 1991, for *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane*
- Washington Post*/Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award: 1992, for distinguished work in the field of nonfiction for children
- Golden Kite Award: 1991, for *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane*; 1993, for *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery*; 1994, for *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade against Child Labor*; 1998, for *Martha Graham: A Dancer's Life*
- Boston Globe-Horn Book Award*: 1994, for *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery*
- Spur Award (Western Writers of America): 1996, for *The Life and Death of Crazy Horse*; 2002, for *In the Days of the Vaqueros*
- Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal (American Library Association): 1998, for body of work
- Silver Medallion (University of Southern Mississippi): 1999, for life's work in children's literature

FURTHER READING

Books

- Author Talk: Conversations with Judy Blume*, 2000
- Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, Vol. 24, 1998
- Children's Books and Their Creators*, 1995
- Sixth Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators*, 1989
- Something about the Author*, Vol. 71, 1993
- St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers*, 1999
- Who's Who in America*, 2003
- Writers for Young Adults*, Vol. 2, 1997

Periodicals

- Booklist*, Sep. 15, 1998, p.224
- Chicago Tribune*, May 23, 1988, Tempo sec., p.1

Horn Book, Jan.-Feb. 1986, p.27; July-Aug. 1988, pp. 444, 452; July-Aug. 1998, p.455; Nov.- Dec. 2002, p.695
Journal of Youth Services in Libraries, Summer 1998, p.353
Publishers Weekly, July 19, 1993, p.228; Feb. 14, 2000, p.98
School Library Journal, Mar. 1994, p.138

Online Articles

<http://www.lib.usm.edu/>
(*de Grummond Children's Literature Collection*, "Russell Freedman Honored as 30th Recipient of USM Medallion," 1999)
<http://www2.scholastic.com/>
(*Scholastic.com*, "Russell Freedman's Interview Transcript," 2002)

Online Databases

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, articles from *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, 1998; *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2002; and *St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers*, 1999

Other

Additional information for this profile was gathered through a personal interview with Russell Freedman for *Biography Today Authors*, conducted on July 7, 2003.

ADDRESS

Russell Freedman
Scholastic Inc.
Arthur A. Levine Books
557 Broadway
New York, NY 10012

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/authorsandbooks/events/freedman>



Mary GrandPré 1954-

American Artist and Children's Book Illustrator
Illustrator of the American Editions of the "Harry
Potter" Series

BIRTH

Mary GrandPré (pronounced grand-PRAY) was born on February 13, 1954, in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Her father, Thomas GrandPré, worked as a carpenter, while her mother, Isabelle GrandPré, was a grocery supervisor. Mary was the youngest of their four children. She has two older sisters, Joan and Linda, and an older brother, Tom.

YOUTH

GrandPré grew up in Bloomington, Minnesota, where her family moved when she was a baby. She was inspired by various forms of art from an early age. When she attended the local Catholic church, for example, she stared up at the stained glass windows with their rich colors and intricate designs. She also recalled being mesmerized by the animated films of Walt Disney. "I didn't grow up around a lot of books," she noted, "but I have vivid memories of going to the movies — *Peter Pan*, *Snow White*, *Pinocchio*." Another of GrandPré's early influences was her father, an accomplished storyteller and amateur cartoonist. She claimed that her father's stories

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GrandPré first gained attention for her artistic skills at the age of five, when she drew a picture of Mickey Mouse. "I remember my parents praising me for it," she noted, "then I continued with the rest of the Disney characters."

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helped fuel her imagination. "He made up a cast of characters who came and went in different adventures," she recalled. "We sat and listened to him night after night."

GrandPré first gained attention for her own artistic skills at the age of five, when she drew a picture of Mickey Mouse. "I remember my parents praising me for it," she noted, "then I continued with the rest of the Disney characters." As she grew older, she honed her talents by copying black-and-white pictures out of the encyclopedia. "I must have been bored," she acknowledged. "But to me it was fun. I loved the colors of black and white." GrandPré eventually began

studying the work of famous artists. When she was 12, she developed a particular fascination with the work of the 20th-century Spanish painter Salvador Dali. Dali was known as a surrealist who created fantastic representations of everyday things. His best-known painting, *The Persistence of Memory*, shows clocks melting in a strange, deserted landscape. "I liked the way he stretched things — made them real, but weird," GrandPré stated.

EDUCATION

GrandPré attended schools in Bloomington. Her teachers there often singled her out for her artistic talents. "Mary was always kind of a dreamer," said her sister Linda. "Even in grade school, she was so much better [at art] than anyone else her age." Despite the encouragement she received, how-

ever, GrandPré did not pursue formal art training when she graduated from high school. She worked as a waitress for several years until one of her fellow waitresses finally convinced her to continue her education.

GrandPré then began attending the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. It was during her time in art school that she first considered a career in illustration. "I'd always thought of illustration as a kind of boring, commercial thing," she admitted. "I was a fine arts major, so I approached illustration with that attitude. And it came to a point where it really worked for me because I started solving illustration ideas with the natural way that I draw." GrandPré graduated from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in the early 1980s with a degree in fine arts.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

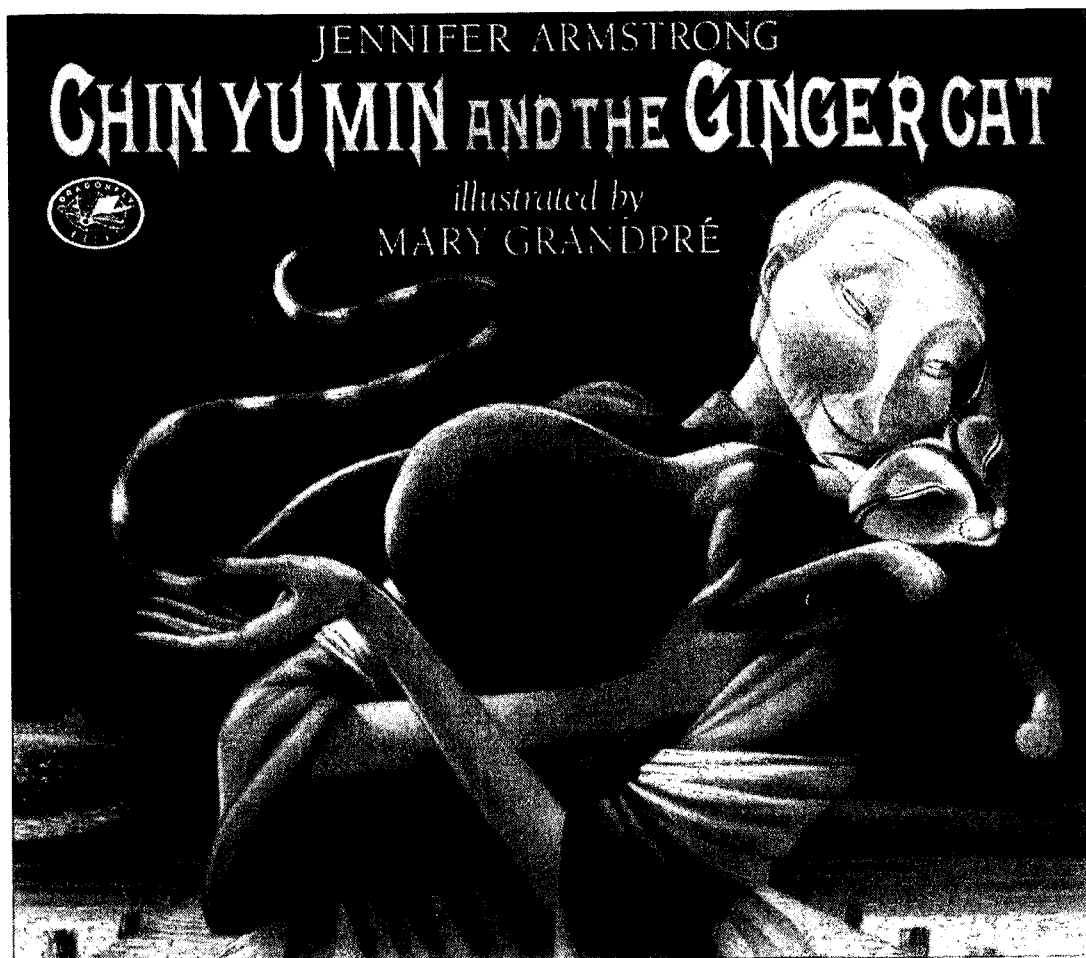
In 20 years as a free-lance artist, Mary GrandPré has built a successful career in several fields of illustration. She has worked for advertising agencies, design firms, and corporations, as well as for publishers of books and magazines. In 1993, GrandPré illustrated her first children's book, *Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat* by Jennifer Armstrong. But her work only gained widespread attention five years later, when she illustrated the American edition of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling. By creating the cover and interior illustrations for this book, GrandPré gave the popular boy wizard a face in the minds of millions of U.S. readers. As the "Harry Potter" series continued through several volumes and became a phenomenal worldwide success, GrandPré's career took off as well.

Developing Her Artistic Style

After earning her fine arts degree from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, GrandPré began looking for jobs in her field. She carried a portfolio of her artwork to a number of local advertising agencies. Her first job as an artist involved designing the box for a brand of sausage.

Throughout the early years of her career, GrandPré felt as though she needed to develop a personal artistic style. "I really struggled after college," she recalled. "I was pulling my hair out and losing sleep because I didn't feel like I had a style." GrandPré's work gradually evolved toward a style she called "soft geometry." Her paintings used pastel colors and a light-hearted, whimsical approach, but also showed a concern for structure and design.

Over the years, GrandPré won a number of commercial illustration jobs and built up a nice collection of printed pieces. Her work appeared in ad-



vertisements, on billboards, and in such famous national magazines as the *New Yorker* and *Business Week*. GrandPré also had the opportunity to design background scenery for the DreamWorks animated film *Antz*. She enjoyed looking at the world from an ant's point of view and then seeing her landscapes stretched across the big screen when the movie was completed.

Illustrating Children's Books

In the early 1990s GrandPré career expanded into the field of children's book illustration. She soon found that she enjoyed interpreting children's stories through her art. "I really enjoy the children's book industry because it allows you to focus on a big project for a long time," she explained. "There's nothing to disrupt your train of thought."

The first children's book GrandPré illustrated was *Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat*, written by Jennifer Armstrong and published in 1993. This folktale, set in ancient China, tells the story of a proud and arrogant widow named Chin Yu Min who spends her money foolishly and rejects offers of

friendship from her neighbors. She eventually finds herself poor and lonely. But then she meets a wise cat that is able to catch fish with its tail. She develops a deep affection for the ginger cat and is overcome with grief when he disappears. Chin Yu Min's desperate need to find the animal forces her to change her ways and approach her neighbors for help.

Upon reading the manuscript for *Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat*, GrandPré immediately identified with the main character and her relationship with the cat. "The old woman touched my heart immediately," she recalled. "I love my own cats so much that I related in some respects to the woman's anguish at the loss of hers." She came up with ideas for the illustrations by thinking of the story in movie form. "I started to imagine how the story would look if it were a film, a series of moving pictures," she noted. "Once I had that vision, the whole book came to me in less than an hour's time." GrandPré also drew details for the illustrations from her memories of a recent trip she had made to China, Korea, and Thailand.

The end result garnered praise from book reviewers. "The illustrations, with their strong, almost exaggerated, characterizations, show the gradual transformation of Chin Yu Min from arrogant tyrant to humble friend with humor and fine style," Nancy Vasilikis wrote in *Horn Book*. GrandPré's

"sumptuous palette of golds, gingers, browns, and maroons suffuses the illustrations with warmth, and the smoky, textured pastels create an aura of mystery befitting the exotic locale," Mary-Alice Moore added in *Publishers Weekly*.

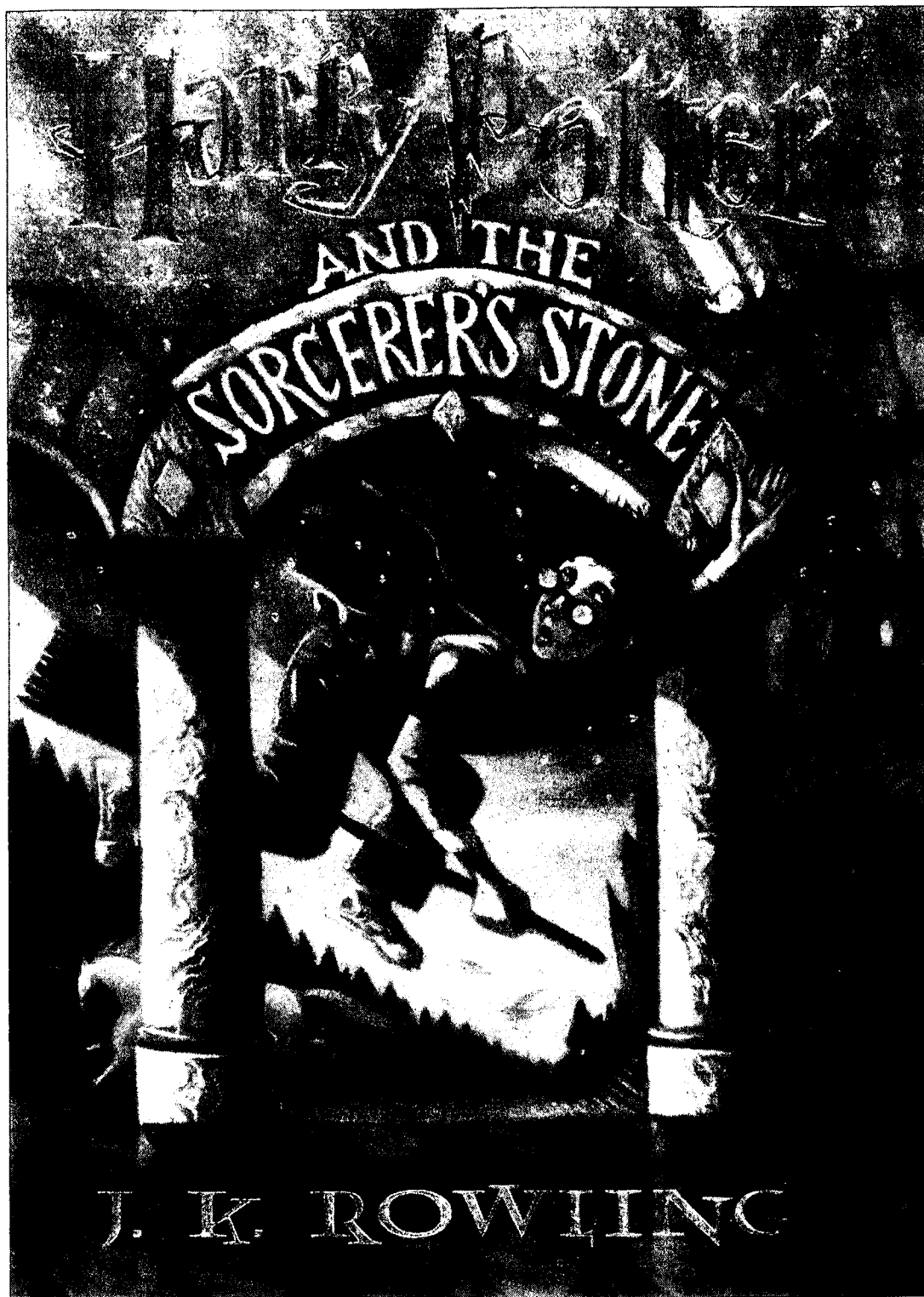
The success of *Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat* led to a series of new illustrating projects for GrandPré. Her next work was *The Vegetables Go to Bed*, a picture book written by Christopher King and published in 1994. The following year she illustrated *The Thread of Life*, a collection of Italian folktales retold by Domenico Vittorini. As with her first book, reviewers praised GrandPré's lyrical pastel illustrations and said that they added to the stories.

In 1997 GrandPré illustrated *Batwings and the Curtain of Night*, written by Marguerite W. Davol. This original creation story follows the creatures of the night—such as bats, owls, coyotes, and panthers—as they attempt to

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"I really enjoy the children's book industry because it allows you to focus on a big project for a long time. There's nothing to disrupt your train of thought."

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bring more light into their world. "GrandPré uses pastels to create a velvety, subtly illuminated nighttime look," Susan Dove Lempke wrote in *Booklist*. "The pictures swirl with movement, so the story and illustrations almost dance off the page."

Creating Artwork for the American Editions of “Harry Potter”

By the late 1990s GrandPré had gained a reputation as a talented illustrator of children’s books. In 1997 a representative of the Scholastic publishing company called to invite her to work on a new project. The job involved producing artwork for the cover and chapter headings of the American edition of a book previously published in Great Britain. “I got the commission much like any other illustration project,” she recalled. “The art director at Scholastic, David Saylor, called me to illustrate the covers. He had seen my children’s books and liked the way I dealt with atmosphere, light, and perspective.”

The book was *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, written by British first-time author J.K. Rowling. The story begins when an unhappy orphan named Harry Potter turns 11 years old and discovers that he is a wizard with magical powers. Harry leaves the home of his neglectful, non-magical aunt and uncle to attend Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Witchcraft. At Hogwarts, Harry learns that his parents were legendary wizards who were killed by the evil sorcerer Lord Voldemort. Voldemort tried to kill the infant Harry as well, but only managed to leave a scar in the shape of a lightning bolt on Harry’s forehead. The encounter with Harry stripped Voldemort of his dark powers, and he vowed to take revenge against the boy.

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“When I received [the manuscript for Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone], I was shocked by the complexity of the text, expecting it to be simply a children’s book. I was enthralled from the start, though I had to reread it a couple of times because the manuscript was so packed with rich, vivid visual information.”

GrandPré was impressed with the book from the first time she saw it. “When I received [the manuscript], I was shocked by the complexity of the text, expecting it to be simply a children’s book,” she remembered. “I was enthralled from the start, though I had to reread it a couple of times because the manuscript was so packed with rich, vivid visual information.”

After reading the book several times, GrandPré prepared several rough sketches for the cover and sent them to Scholastic. “It was quite easy to develop the initial character studies because J.K. Rowling was thorough but imaginative with her descriptions of the characters,” she noted. “I tried

“It was quite easy to develop the initial character studies because J.K. Rowling was thorough but imaginative with her descriptions of the characters. I tried to stay as close as possible to her descriptions, and since her writing was so vivid, it was not only easy but exciting.”



to stay as close as possible to her descriptions, and since her writing was so vivid, it was not only easy but exciting.” The publishers chose one sketch to appear on the cover, and GrandPré painted a final version. Once she completed her work on the American edition of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, she was ready to put the project behind her. “At the time, it just seemed like another job,” she recalled.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone was published in the United States in September 1998. It became an immediate sensation and eventually a runaway best-seller. “No one saw this coming— not [the publishers], not I,” GrandPré noted. “It’s been a really big surprise.” The illustrator unexpectedly found herself in the middle of a storm of attention surrounding the book. She gave many interviews, visited numerous bookstores and schools, and signed countless autographs for enthusiastic fans of the boy wizard. She was even asked to draw a picture of Harry Potter to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine.

Given the phenomenal popularity of the book, Scholastic decided to publish American editions of all future books in the “Harry Potter” series and asked GrandPré to design their covers. The next four volumes in the series were *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (published in the United States in 1999), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (also published in 1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (published in 2000), and *Harry Potter and*

the Order of the Phoenix (published in 2003). As of 2003, the “Harry Potter” series had sold over 200 million copies in more than 100 countries around the world. The series is eventually planned to include seven books—one for each of Harry’s years as a student at Hogwarts.

Becoming Closely Associated with “Harry Potter”

GrandPré is not the only illustrator of the “Harry Potter” books. For instance, the original British editions had a different illustrator. But American readers are most familiar with her artwork. Indeed, GrandPré can be said to have given Harry Potter a face in the minds of American readers. “I feel like J.K. Rowling is Harry’s mom and I am his stepmom; after all, I gave him his face. At least his American face,” she stated. “I am proud to be a part of the books, as they will sit on the shelves as a classic for years to come.”

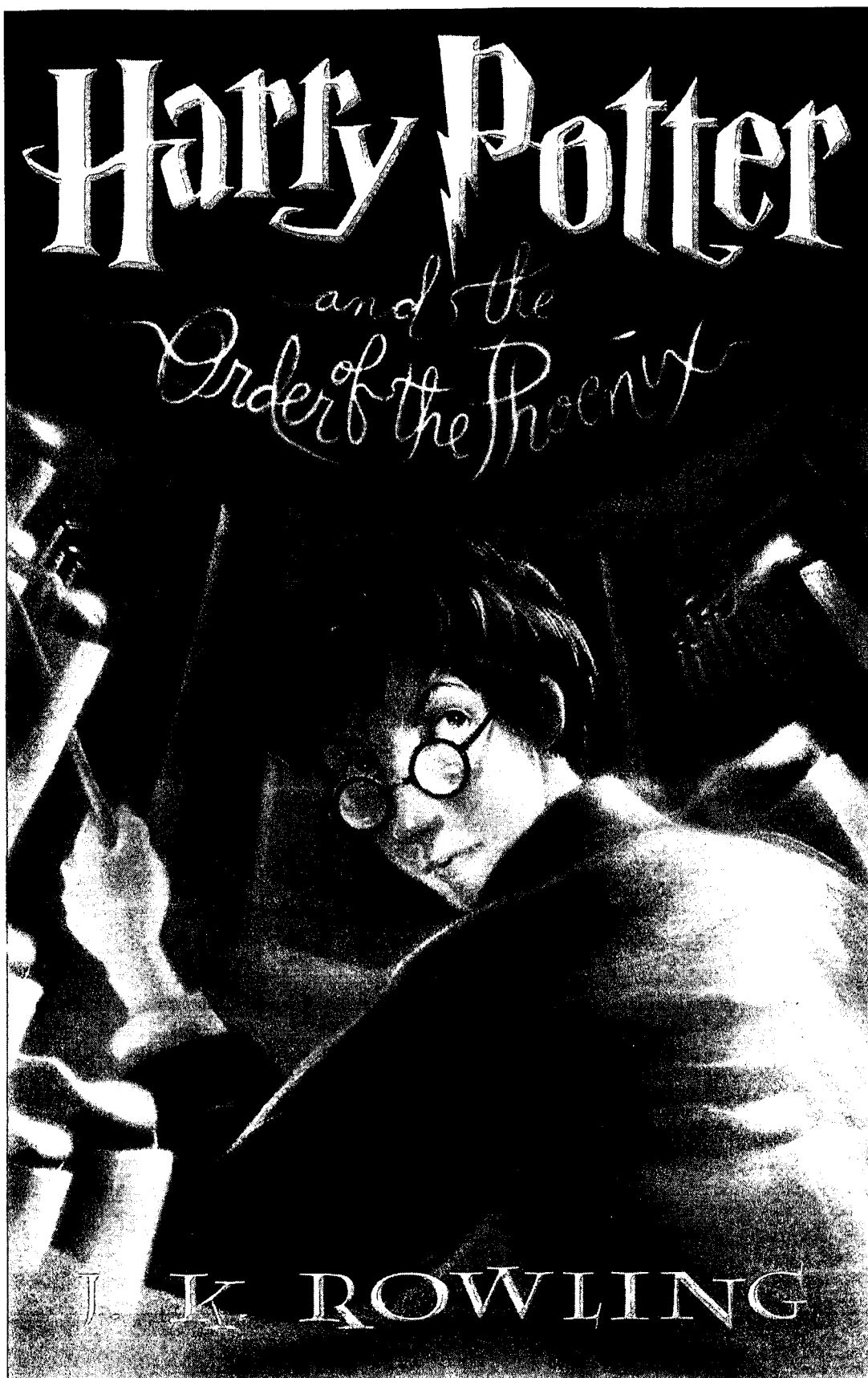
GrandPré’s covers feature brilliant pastel colors and usually show Harry in the middle of an exciting adventure. The pictures often incorporate symbols and characters from the story. “I kind of think of the book cover as a mysterious map,” she explained. “It’s full of bits and pieces you’ll find in the book.” GrandPré also provides black-and-white charcoal drawings that appear at the beginning of each chapter. These pictures hint at events that occur in the chapters without giving away any secrets.



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For each volume in the series, GrandPré studies Rowling's text in order to create illustrations that are true to the author's vision of the characters. "I read the book carefully," she stated, "and as I'm reading the story I'm listening to what the author has to say about his physical looks and I try to picture this boy by the way she describes his movements or the way he talks." GrandPré did not meet the author until 1999, when they had dinner together. "It's common for publishers to keep authors and illustrators apart so they don't step on each other's vision," she noted. During their meeting, however, GrandPré was pleased to hear Rowling say that she liked her illustrations best of all the ones that have appeared in various editions.

The process of illustrating a volume in the "Harry Potter" series takes GrandPré about two months. Since she sees Rowling's books before they are available to the public, the publisher swears her to secrecy. "I receive the manuscript months before the book is out and it's a very high-pressure time for me, with tight deadlines and lots of secrecy," she noted. "I just try to deal with it like I would any other illustration project and live my life as normally as possible."

After illustrating five volumes in the "Harry Potter" series, GrandPré continues to enjoy reading the books.

She also feels that they have a great deal to offer young readers. "I believe the greatest value of the Harry Potter books is their power to bring kids together to read and to imagine the endless possibilities about a child who comes from a place of doom and gloom and finds the power within himself to rise above it magically," she said. "I think they give kids a sense of hope and a belief that anything is possible. Besides, it's a really cool story with lots of scary stuff to boot! In a time when computer screens are often a kid's best friend, a good book like Harry Potter can be an amazing thing."

Like many other fans of the "Harry Potter" series, GrandPré was dismayed at the criticism the books received from parents who did not want their children to read about witchcraft. "The book isn't about evil, sorcery, or witchery. It's about overcoming evil things with the power inside yourself," she stated. "I think it's great that parents are concerned about what their kids read, but they should also be concerned about what's on television and in the movies. Harry Potter seems pretty tame compared to that."

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"I feel like J.K. Rowling is Harry's mom and I am his stepmom; after all, I gave him his face. At least his American face. I am proud to be a part of the books, as they will sit on the shelves as a classic for years to come."

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Despite her long and varied career as an artist, GrandPré has become best known as the illustrator of the “Harry Potter” books. “Harry has definitely taken over a portion of my life,” she acknowledged. “And having my art be so widely seen is a little spooky, since I’m better known for more abstract, stylized art. But if Harry Potter is more popular than my other work, so be it. I’m thankful that it’s been successful; it’s good for Harry and everyone involved.” While GrandPré is thrilled to be associated with the series, she also looks forward to being able to focus on other projects. “I feel like Harry is definitely a part of my family,” she stated, “but I can’t wait until he turns 18 and moves out of the house!”

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Other Projects

Throughout the years she has worked on the “Harry Potter” series, GrandPré has continued illustrating other children’s books as well. In 1998 she reunited with author Jennifer Armstrong to produce the book *Pockets*. It tells the story of a mysterious seamstress who comes to a simple town and begins mending people’s clothes. She gradually begins adding ornaments and scenes from faraway lands to the pockets of drab apparel, which fuels the townspeople’s imaginations. “GrandPré’s artwork . . . delicately balances the sullen tones of the town with the brilliant colors of the villagers’ visions,” wrote a reviewer for

Publishers Weekly. “She festoons the images of exotic times and places with the detailed stitchery of the pocket embroidery that inspired them.”

In 2000 GrandPré illustrated *The House of Wisdom*, written by Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland. This book, which won a Middle East Book Award, tells the story of a young boy growing up in ninth-century Baghdad who goes on a search for knowledge and wisdom. “GrandPré’s lushly colored pastels detail the ornate patterns of the Baghdad rooftops as easily as they convey the sweltering heat of a caravan of camels,” stated a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer.

In 2002 GrandPré provided artwork for *The Sea Chest* by Toni Buzzeo. In this book, an elderly woman tells her great-grand-niece about her lonely youth as the only child of a lighthouse keeper in Maine. One day, after a



terrible storm hits the coast, she finds a leather sea chest with a baby inside. The baby's parents died in a shipwreck, so her family raises the child. As the story progresses, the reader learns that the aunt is telling the story while the niece is waiting for the arrival of her own adopted sister from overseas. GrandPré worked closely with the author—who did research at Maine's maritime museums and sent shells plucked from the seashore—in order to create realistic illustrations for the book.

Recently, GrandPré has completed the illustrations for two poetry collections. First up was *Plum* (2003), a collection of 20 silly poems for children by British author Tony Mitton. "GrandPré and Tony Milton must be soul-mates," wrote Mary Ann Grossman in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. "His verses inspired her to create vividly colored, bursting-with-life pictures in rich, subtle colors." GrandPré also joined several other prominent illustrators in contributing pictures for *Swing around the Sun* (2003), a new edition of a 1965 poetry collection by the late Barbara Juster Esbensen. The collection is divided into seasons, featuring poems with artworks by various illustrators

that evoke the symbols and the moods of the seasons. GrandPré provided illustrations for the fall section.

As GrandPré's career as an illustrator progressed, several publishers asked her to think about writing her own children's books. "I've toyed with the idea," she once said. "I think that many of the children's books published

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"I try to approach each job with a quiet kind of focus, not so much on how my style fits the job, but how that problem should be solved. No technique should be bigger or more important than the problem the illustration needs to solve. The combination of a good basic understanding of what makes a picture work—good composition, good color, good drawing—combined with a strong concept can enable you to work on anything."

these days are way over the kids' heads. I'm not sure who they're for, the kids or the adults. I think sometimes we give children too much at an early age." GrandPré finally collaborated with her husband, fellow artist Tom Casmer, to write and illustrate *Henry and Pawl*. This book, which is scheduled for publication in 2004, tells the story of a very creative boy and his adorable dog. It is based in part on the stories GrandPré's father told during her childhood.

GrandPré works in a studio that she added on to the back of her home in St. Paul, Minnesota. She makes a point of maintaining an original style rather than imitating the work of other artists. "I almost try to wear blinders—I don't really want to know too much about what's going on out there," she explained. "I try to approach each job with a quiet kind of focus, not so much on how my style fits the job, but how that problem should be solved. No technique should be bigger or more important than the problem the illustration needs to solve. The combination of a good basic understanding of what makes a picture work—good composition, good color, good drawing—combined with a strong concept can enable you to work on anything."

GrandPré realizes that her career took an unusual turn with the success of the "Harry Potter" series. She hopes to take advantage of the opportunities it created for her as an artist. "Like a tree, you grow with every experience. Life branches off, and you get new fruit on each limb!" she declared. "I just want to keep making art—wherever it takes me."



GrandPré among her paintings in her studio in St. Paul, Minnesota.

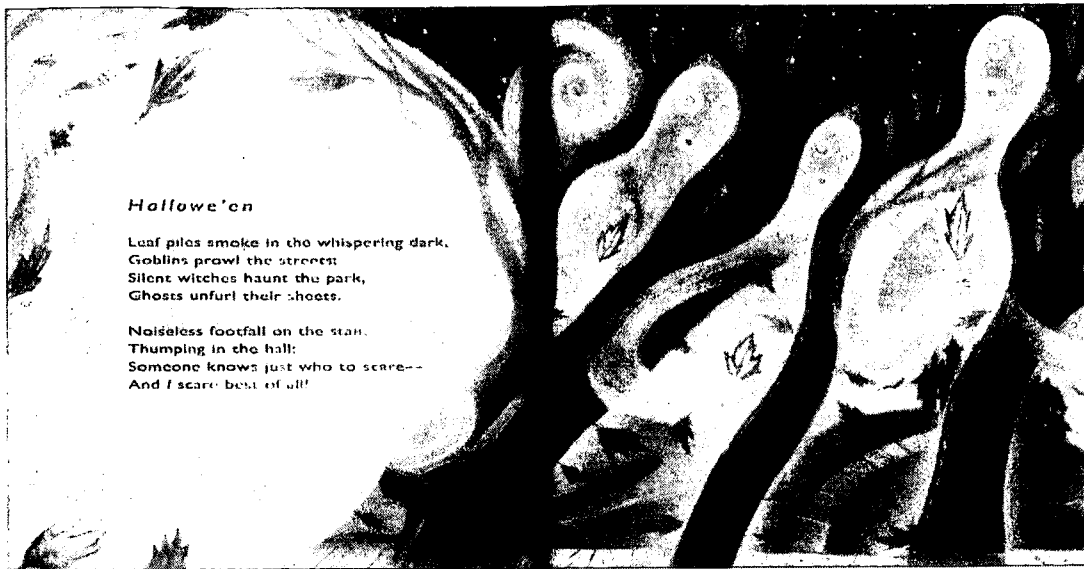
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

GrandPré has been married twice. She divorced her first husband, designer Kevin Whaley, in 1994. The following year she met fellow artist Tom Casmer when she was invited to speak to his students at the College of Visual Arts in St. Paul, Minnesota. They began dating soon afterward and were married in 2000. They live in St. Paul in a house they share with a number of pets. They receive frequent visits from Casmer's children from his first marriage.

SELECTED WRITINGS

As Illustrator

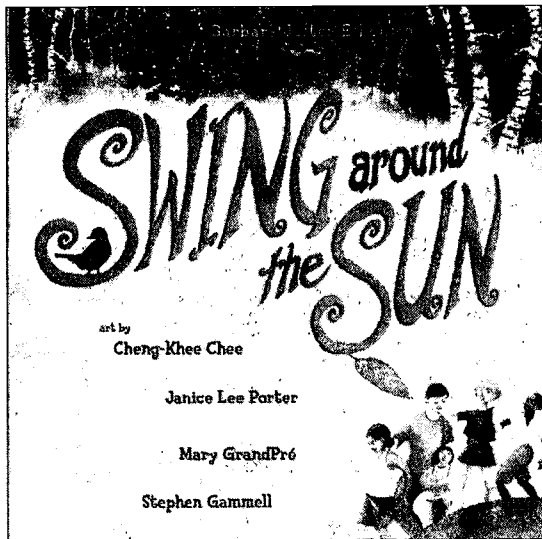
- Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat*, 1993 (written by Jennifer Armstrong)
The Vegetables Go to Bed, 1994 (written by Christopher King)
The Thread of Life, 1995 (folktales retold by Domenico Vittorini)
Batwings and the Curtain of Night, 1997 (written by Marguerite W. Davol)
Pockets, 1998 (written by Jennifer Armstrong)



Hallowe'en

Leaf piles smoke in the whispering dark,
Goblins crawl the streets:
Silent witches haunt the park,
Ghosts unfurl their sheets.

Noiseless footfall on the stair,
Thumping in the hall:
Someone knows just who to scare---
And I scare best of all!



Swing around the Sun is a 1965 poetry collection by the late Barbara Juster Esbensen. The collection is divided into seasons, featuring poems with artworks by various illustrators: Cheng-Khee Chee (spring), Janice Lee Porter (summer), Mary GrandPré (fall), and Stephen Gammell (winter). Illustration above by Mary GrandPré; illustration at left by Cheng-Khee Chee.

The House of Wisdom, 1999 (written by Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland)

The Purple Snerd, 2000 (written by Rozanne Lanczak Williams)

Aunt Claire's Yellow Beehive Hair, 2001 (written by Deborah Blumenthal)

The Sea Chest, 2002 (written by Toni Buzzeo)

Plum, 2003 (written by Tony Mitton)

Swing around the Sun, 2003 (written by Barbara Juster Esbensen)

As Illustrator of the "Harry Potter" Series

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, 1998

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, 1999

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, 1999

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, 2000
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, 2003

HONORS AND AWARDS

Middle East Book Award (Middle East Outreach Council): 2000, for *The House of Wisdom*

FURTHER READING

Periodicals

Aberdeen (S.D.) American News, July 9, 2000
American Girl, July/Aug. 2000, p.43
Dayton (Ohio) Daily News, Sep. 9, 1999, p.C3
Publishers Weekly, July 12, 1993, p.24
Minneapolis and St. Paul Magazine, Dec. 1999, p.29; May 2001, p.27
People Weekly, Dec. 18, 2000, p.111
Print, Nov./Dec. 2000, p.A40
St. Paul Pioneer Press, Sep. 6, 1999, p.E1
USA Today, June 27, 2000, p.D8
Washington Post, Feb. 24, 2003, p.C14

Online Articles

<http://www.marygrandpre.com>
 (*Communication Arts*, "Mary GrandPré," 1999, in the Biography section of the web site)

ADDRESS

Mary GrandPré
 Scholastic
 557 Broadway
 New York, NY 10012

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.marygrandpre.com>
<http://www.scholastic.com/harrypotter/books/illustrator>



Dan Greenburg 1936-

American Writer

Author of the "Zack Files" and the "Maximum Boy" Series

BIRTH

Dan Greenburg was born on June 20, 1936, into a Jewish family in Chicago, Illinois. His parents were Samuel Greenburg, an artist, and Leah Rozalsky Greenburg. He had one older sister.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION

Greenburg grew up in a comfortable Chicago neighborhood. He was an imaginative youngster who enjoyed reading, but he struggled at sports and other rough-and-tumble activities. "I was a lousy athlete and got picked on by bullies," he remembered. "I was skinny and wore braces and dreamed of being a superhero. I loved Superman."

Greenburg credits his early interest in writing to members of his family. "I wrote a lot of stories about heroes chasing criminals when I was young, and my grandpa would give me a \$1 for each one," he recalled. "My parents also gave me a lot of praise."

After completing his elementary and high school education in the Chicago area, Greenburg was accepted at the University of Illinois. He studied art, graduating with a bachelor's degree in fine arts in 1958. He then enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he earned a master's degree in 1960.

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*"I was a lousy athlete and
got picked on by bullies,"
Greenburg remembered.*

*"I was skinny and
wore braces and dreamed
of being a superhero.
I loved Superman."*

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

During the course of Greenburg's 40-year career as a writer, he has penned more than 60 books and dozens of articles for national magazines. Until the mid-1990s, most of these works were aimed at adult audiences. In 1996, however, he wrote the first book in his highly popular "Zack Files" series, and in 2000 he launched a second successful book series for children, the "Maximum Boy" stories. These books, noted the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Online*, "have proven to be wildly popular with young readers, who love the way Greenburg combines humor, action, and the supernatural into fast-paced books that are fun to read."

Becoming a Writer

After leaving UCLA in 1960, Greenburg took a job as a writer at a Los Angeles advertising agency. Two years later, he moved to New York City, where he continued to work in the advertising industry. In 1964, though, he published a humorous book for adults called *How to be a Jewish Mother*, in which he poked fun at excessively picky parents. To Greenburg's surprise, the book turned out to be a bestseller. He was so delighted with the

HOW TO BE A JEWISH MOTHER

A Very Careful Training Manual
By Dan Greenburg

The front and back cover of How to Be a Jewish Mother. On the back cover (below), Greenburg is pictured with his mother in 1938 and 1964.



1938

1964

DAN GREENBURG (seen above with mother) grew up in Chicago, studied art at the University of Illinois, received a Master of Arts in Industrial Design at U.C.L.A., and then threw a wonderful education right out the window and became a writer. Since then his writing has appeared in PLAYBOY, ESQUIRE, MONOCLE, EROS (for whom he served as Managing Editor) and TWENTIETH CENTURY PARODY, AMERICAN AND BRITISH. He is currently associated with the New York advertising firm of Papert, Koenig, Lois and, though 28 years of age, he is still unmarried and does not know how to stand up straight or eat properly.

book's success that he decided to leave the world of advertising and build a career as a freelance writer.

Lighthearted Books for Adults and Children

Over the next few years, Greenburg wrote several novels and humorous books for adult audiences. He also completed his first book for children during this time. *Jumbo the Boy and Arnold the Elephant*, which was published in 1969, told the story of a baby elephant and a baby boy who are accidentally switched at birth at a hospital. The tale follows both the elephant family and the human family as they try to adjust to new lives with their very odd and unusual babies. The story was warmly received by both young readers and reviewers. *Library Journal*, for instance, described the book as being full of "far-fetched but amusing whimsy [playfulness]."

As it turned out, however, Greenburg did not write another book for children for two decades. Instead, he concentrated on writing suspense novels and humorous books about sex and other adult topics for grown-ups. In addition, he contributed articles to numerous national magazines during the 1970s and 1980s, including the *New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *New York Times Book Review*, *New York, Ms.*, and *Cosmopolitan*. He even served as co-scriptwriter of a 1983 comedy film called *Private School*, but the film was a commercial and critical flop. *People Weekly*, in fact, described it as "a shoddy, vile, boring movie" with a "dazzlingly moronic" script.

Although Greenburg's venture into screenwriting for the movies proved disappointing, he continued to make a comfortable living as a novelist and humor writer. In 1986, for example, he published a memoir about the experience of becoming a father for the first time at the relatively late age of 48. In *Confessions of a Pregnant Father*, Greenburg blends humor with serious reflections as he recalls his feelings during his wife's pregnancy and the birth of his son, Zack. "It is inspiring to read how lovingly Greenburg and his wife . . . cooperate during the pregnancy and the early weeks of [baby] Zack's life," remarked the *Washington Post*.

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Greenburg credits his early interest in writing to members of his family. "I wrote a lot of stories about heroes chasing criminals when I was young, and my grandpa would give me a \$1 for each one. My parents also gave me a lot of praise."

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In 1991 Greenburg published his second book for children, called *The Bed Who Ran Away from Home*. In this lighthearted tale, a bunk bed shared by twins decides to run away from home because it feels unappreciated. The book was warmly received by both readers and critics. *School Library Journal*, for example, called it "a delightful romp before bedtime."

Later that same year, Greenburg published *Young Santa*, in which he imagines Santa's early years. "It occurred to me that all we know about [Santa] is that he's an old man with a long white beard," explained the author. "He must have had a childhood and a teen age. I began to wonder about the

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Greenburg finished the first "Zack Files" story and sent it to several publishers, but most of them rejected it. "They'd say, 'This is the funniest story I've ever seen — now let me tell you why we're not going to publish it.' No two reasons were ever the same."

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early influences that shaped his character and caused him to do such peculiar things. Why did he go around the world on one night, for example, delivering presents? Where did he get the presents? Why does he live at the North Pole? Why does he wear red? How come he says, 'Ho, ho, ho?'" According to *Publishers Weekly*, "Though some of the humor and wordplay will be over the heads of youngsters, this droll, snappy tale will provide amiable entertainment."

Creating a New Series

Greenburg thoroughly enjoyed writing both *The Bed Who Ran Away from Home* and *Young Santa*. In fact, these experiences convinced him to explore new story ideas for young people. A

short time later, the sight of his young son Zack pitching baseballs to his grandmother inspired the writer to pen a lighthearted children's tale about a home-run-hitting grandma who leads the Chicago White Sox to the playoffs.

Greenburg finished the story and sent it to several publishers of fiction for children and young adults. He admits that he thought it was "the funniest children's book imaginable," but most of the publishing companies rejected it. "They'd say, 'This is the funniest story I've ever seen — now let me tell you why we're not going to publish it.' No two reasons were ever the same," recalled Greenburg. But the editors at one publishing company liked the story so much that they asked him if he could develop an entire series about the boy, whom the author had named Zack after his son.

Greenburg quickly agreed to the idea of a series, and he spent the next several weeks thinking up stories that blended humor with the supernatural. "The series became Zack at [age] 10, who lives part-time with his divorced father, Dan, a writer," he stated. "He'd be a normal boy living in New York who has supernatural adventures."

The "Zack Files" Series

In August 1996 Greenburg published the first four books in the "Zack Files" series—*My Great Grandpa's in the Litter Box*, *Zap! I'm a Mind Reader*, *A Ghost Named Wanda*, and *Through the Medicine Cabinet*.

In each story, Zack finds himself involved in some sort of weird and wacky supernatural experience. In one story, for example, he meets a talking cat that claims to be the reincarnation of his dead grandfather. In another story Zack discovers that he has the ability to read other people's minds.

Greenburg's funny and suspenseful stories about Zack immediately caught the attention of young readers. Many fans wrote in to tell Greenburg how much they liked the books. For example, a reader named Dana wrote that "I really LOVE I mean LOVE your books. I read them a million times. I wish I could buy more. They are good and so funny." And a reader named Madeleine wrote "I love your books. . . . I hope you keep making more 'Zack Files.'" Reviewers were equally enthusiastic. *School Library Journal* claimed that "kids will find some of the episodes [in these stories] tremendously funny." A reviewer in *Horn Book* added that the stories had "originality and pizzazz," and praised the series as a quality reading alternative for youngsters who were not quite ready for "Goosebumps" and other supernatural book series.

At first, Greenburg's son Zack was caught off guard by the fuss surrounding the books. He found it very strange that some of his classmates were reading books that featured a character based on himself. "I think he was both pleased and maybe a little embarrassed," said Greenburg. As Zack and his friends grew older, however, the attention died down. After a few years Zack came to view the series as a pretty cool part of his childhood.





By 2003, Greenburg had published 30 books in the "Zack Files" series. The books remain popular with young readers, and they even became the basis for a "Zack Files" television show that appeared on the cable ABC Family

Channel through 2002. Greenburg claims that he has had little difficulty coming up with plot ideas for the series. "Many of the 'Zack Files' stories were inspired by adventures I've had with my wife Judith and my actual son Zack," he explained. "For example, a trip to Hawaii to explore a live volcano inspired the book *The Volcano Goddess Will See You Now*, a trip to Florida to swim with dolphins inspired the book *How to Speak Dolphin in Three Easy Lessons*, and a recent trip to a Texas tiger farm to learn how to take care of lions and tigers without getting seriously chewed inspired a book that is currently being written."

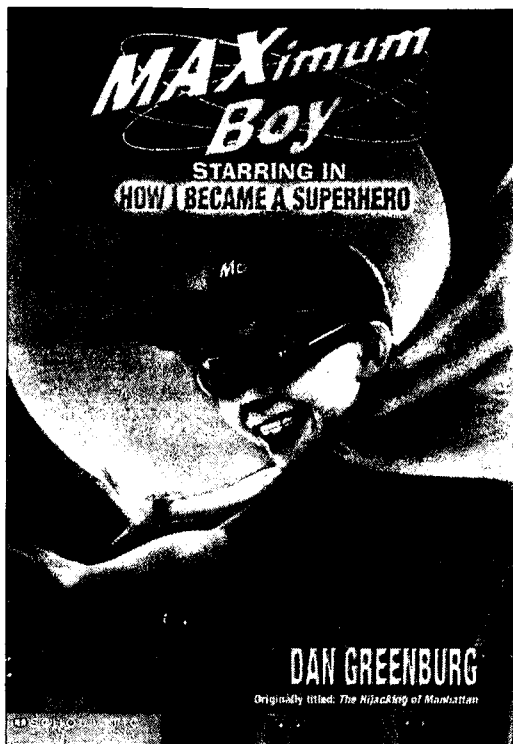
Greenburg also assures readers that he has dozens of ideas for Zack adventures waiting in the wings. "There's something about a series that's just a whole other way of working," he said. "I live with the characters and know them well. All I have to do is figure out a phenomenon for Zack to encounter, whether it's becoming invisible or turning into a cat or his orthodontist turning into a monster." Greenburg also points out that he really enjoys writing for young readers on a full-time basis. "It's just the most enthusiastic audience I've ever found in my writing," he said.

Finally, Greenburg is enormously proud of the fact that his books seem to be very popular with boys and girls who don't ordinarily enjoy reading. "I have a letter framed above my desk from a mom in New York whose son has attention deficit disorder (ADD)," he stated. "She wrote that she used to take her son into bookstores and tell him he could buy any book he wanted, but he was never interested. Then she bought him a 'Zack Files' book. He read it and told her, 'I want to read all the 'Zack Files' books.' So he read them all, then told her, 'I want more books.' This mother told me,

“

"I have a letter framed above my desk from a mom in New York whose son has attention deficit disorder (ADD). She wrote that she used to take her son into bookstores and tell him he could buy any book he wanted, but he was never interested. Then she bought him a 'Zack Files' book. He read it and told her, 'I want to read all the 'Zack Files' books.' So he read them all, then told her, 'I want more books.' This mother told me, 'You've turned him on to reading.' . . . There's nothing more fulfilling than hearing that you've turned a kid on to books. That's enough for a career right there."

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Between the “Zack Files” and “Maximum Boy” series, Greenburg claims that he is having “the most fun I ever had in my life. . . . I love to tell stories, about places I go, things that make people laugh. And I love to get praise.”

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‘You’ve turned him on to reading.’ . . . There’s nothing more fulfilling than hearing that you’ve turned a kid on to books. That’s enough for a career right there.”

In the meantime, the “Zack Files” books remain popular with reviewers and teachers as well as students. “Mr. Greenburg may never win a Newbery Award, [but] his books are considered a cut above the usual meat grinder efforts that are increasingly taking over children’s literature,” commented the *New York Times*. The *Horn Book* sees the success of the series in positive terms as well, noting that “Throughout [his adventures], Zack remains a believably ordinary New York City fifth grader caught in bizarre circumstances. As he puts it, ‘if a weird thing has a choice of happening to me or to somebody else, it always picks me.’”

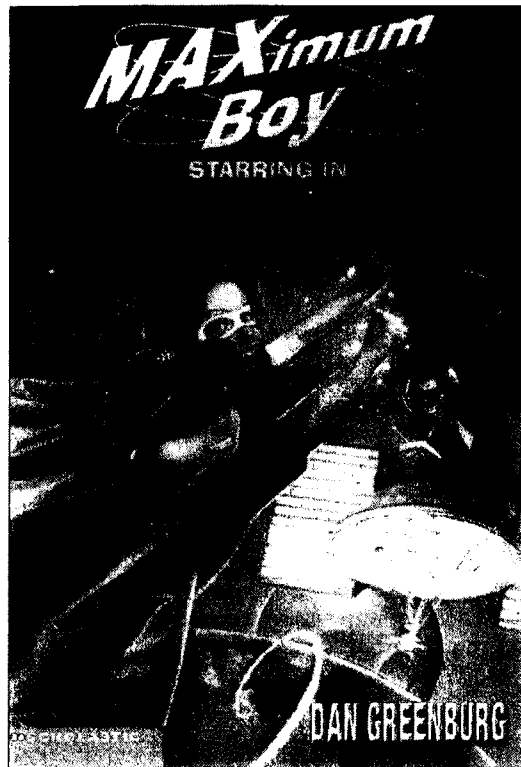
The “Maximum Boy” Series

In 2000 Greenburg launched a second series for young readers. The “Maximum Boy” tales center around a likable 11-year-old boy named Max who gains super powers after he touches space rocks at a museum. In creating Max, the author used all sort of elements from his own childhood. For example, Max has to deal with school bullies and an older sister who bosses him around, just like Greenburg did as a youngster. Greenburg even introduced his childhood dislike for mathematics into the series by making Max lose his special powers whenever he’s exposed to a math problem.

By the end of 2002, Greenburg had published six books about Maximum Boy, and he has plans to write many more. In fact, between the "Zack Files" and "Maximum Boy" series, Greenburg claims that he is having "the most fun I ever had in my life. . . . I love to tell stories, about places I go, things that make people laugh. And I love to get praise."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Greenburg married novelist Nora Ephron on April 9, 1967, but their marriage ended in divorce in the 1970s. In June 1980 he married writer and editor Suzanne O'Malley. They had one son, Zack, before they divorced in the mid-1990s. As a youngster, Zack played the title role in *Lorenzo's Oil*, a 1992 motion picture starring Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon.



On October 17, 1998, Greenburg entered into his third marriage, marrying writer Judith C. Wilson. They live in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, where Judith "J.C." Greenburg has established her own book series aimed at young readers. Her "Andrew" stories concern Andrew Dubble, a 10-year-old inventor who accidentally gets shrunk down to microscopic size. In each book, the tiny adventurer roams a part of his house as he tries to return to the invention that will restore him to normal size.

FAVORITE AUTHORS

Greenburg enjoys reading all sorts of literature. His favorite authors of books for adults include J.D. Salinger, Bruce Jay Friedman, Philip Roth, and Elmore Leonard. He is also a big fan of several children's book authors, including A.A. Milne, Roald Dahl, Jeff Brown, and Dav Pilkey.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Greenburg loves to travel, and in recent years he has become very interested in conservation programs that help tigers, lions, leopards, and other large cats of the animal kingdom. In April 2001, for example, Greenburg

devoted an entire vacation to working at the Bridgeport Nature Center in Bridgeport, Texas. The center is a wildlife refuge that cares for big cats that have been abused and rescued. "It was the best experience of my life," recalls Greenburg.

SELECTED WRITINGS

For Adults

How to Be a Jewish Mother, 1964
How to Avoid Love and Marriage, 1983
Confessions of a Pregnant Father, 1986

For Children

Jumbo the Boy and Arnold the Elephant, 1969
The Bed Who Ran Away from Home, 1991
Young Santa, 1991

The "Zack Files" Series

Great-Grandpa's in the Litter Box, 1996
Through the Medicine Cabinet, 1996
Zap! I'm a Mind Reader, 1996
A Ghost Named Wanda, 1996
Dr. Jekyll, Orthodontist, 1997
I'm Out of My Body . . . Please Leave a Message, 1997
Never Trust a Cat Who Wears Earrings, 1997
My Son, the Time Traveler, 1997
The Volcano Goddess Will See You Now, 1997
Bozo the Clone, 1997
How to Speak to Dolphins in Three Easy Lessons, 1997
Now You See Me . . . Now You Don't, 1998
The Misfortune Cookie, 1998
Elvis the Turnip . . . and Me, 1998
Hang a Left at Venus, 1999
Evil Queen Tut and the Great Ant Pyramids, 1999
Yikes! Grandma's a Teenager, 1999
How I Fixed the Year 1000 Problem, 1999
The Boy Who Cried Bigfoot, 2000
How I Went from Bad to Verse, 2000
Don't Count on Dracula, 2000
This Body's Not Big Enough for Both of Us, 2000

Greenish Eggs and Dinosaurs, 2001
My Grandma, Major-League Slugger, 2001
Trapped in the Museum of Unnatural History, 2002
Me and My Mummy, 2002
My Teacher Ate My Homework, 2002
Tell a Lie and Your Butt Will Grow, 2002
Just Add Water . . . and Scream! 2003
It's Itchcraft! 2003



The "Maximum Boy" Series

How I Became a Superhero, 2000
The Day Everything Tasted Like Broccoli, 2001
Super Hero . . . Or Super Thief? 2001
Invasion from the Planet of the Cows, 2001
Maximum Girl Unmasked, 2002
Attack of the Soggy Underwater People, 2002
Meet Super Sid, Crime-Fighting Kid, 2002
The Worst Bully in the Entire Universe, 2003

FURTHER READING

Books

Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Vol. 9, 1983; Vol. 25, 1989
 Greenburg, Dan. *Confessions of a Pregnant Father*, 1986
Something About the Author, Vol. 102, 1999
Who's Who in America, 2003

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Booklist, Jan. 1, 1997, p.859
Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, Nov. 1991, p.63
Chicago Tribune, Dec. 12, 1991, p.12 (Tempo section)
Detroit Free Press, Mar. 28, 2002, Yak section, p.5
Horn Book, July/Aug. 1997, p.432

Library Journal, Apr. 15, 1969, p.1768
New York Times, Mar. 23, 1986, p.44, section 7; May 7, 1998, p.B2
People Weekly, Aug. 22, 1983, p.10
Premiere, Dec. 1992, p.86
School Library Journal, July 1991, p.56; Feb. 1997, p.81; Mar. 1997, p.159;
Apr. 2003, p.121
Vancouver (B.C.) Sun, May 27, 2002, p.B12
Washington Post, May 3, 1986, p.H2
Westchester (N.Y.) Journal News, Feb. 13, 1999, p.E1

Online Articles

<http://www.cbomc.com>
(*Children's Book of the Month Club*, "Interview with Dan Greenburg," undated)
<http://www.kidsreads.com>
(*KidsReads.com*, "Dan Greenburg," 2000)
<http://www.penguinputnam.com>
(*Penguin Putnam Online*, "Interview with Zack!" undated)
<http://www.post-gazette.com>
(*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Online*, "'Zack' Author Having the Time of His Life," Dec. 24, 2001)

Online Databases

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, article from *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2001

ADDRESS

Dan Greenburg
Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers
345 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.penguinputnam.com>
<http://www.scholastic.com>



Nikki Grimes 1950-

American Poet and Novelist

Winner of the 2003 Coretta Scott King Award for
Bronx Masquerade

BIRTH

Nikki Grimes was born on October 20, 1950, in Harlem, a section of New York City. Her father, James Grimes, was a musician, and her mother, Bernice (McMillan) Grimes, was a key-punch operator. She had an older sister.

YOUTH

When Grimes was young, her family had a lot of problems. Her parents struggled to take care of her, and she often went to live with relatives or even in foster homes. As a result, she ended up living in every borough of New York City except for Staten Island during her youth. "I was moved around a lot as a child, always having to adjust to new neighborhoods, new schools, new faces," she recalled. "The most difficult aspect of my constant

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"I was moved around a lot as a child, always having to adjust to new neighborhoods, new schools, new faces. The most difficult aspect of my constant uprooting was struggling to make new friends, leaving them behind, moving to a new neighborhood, and starting the whole process over again."

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uprooting was struggling to make new friends, leaving them behind, moving to a new neighborhood, and starting the whole process over again."

Grimes loved books as a child, partly because reading provided an escape from her problems. At the same time, however, she recognized that few of the books she read featured African-American characters whose experiences were similar to her own. "The word, both written and spoken, has always held a special fascination for me," she noted. "It seemed uncanny that words, spread across a page just so, had the power to transport me to another time or place. But they could. I spent many hours ensconced in the local library, reading — nay, devouring — book after book after book. Books were my soul's delight. Even so, in one sense, the stories I read betrayed

me. Too few gave me back my mirror image. Fewer still spoke to, or acknowledged, the existence of the problems I faced as a black foster child from a dysfunctional and badly broken home. I couldn't articulate it then, but I sensed a need for validation which the books I read did not supply."

Grimes's fascination with books and language led her toward writing. "I began writing when I was six years old, and I was immediately drawn to poetry," she remembered. "The challenge of painting a picture or telling a story in only a few words intrigued me, and so I filled one spiral notebook after another with verse." Grimes wanted to become a writer in order to tell stories about kids who looked and felt like she did growing up. Although her mother felt she should find a more practical career, both her father and sister were very encouraging. "I especially remember my father

taking me to the home of author John Oliver Killens, who presented me with my first autographed book," she noted. "He signed it 'to a fellow writer.' When I read those words, I nearly burst!"

During the civil rights movement of the 1960s—when African-Americans struggled to gain equal rights in American society—Grimes wrote poems about racism and read them in coffee houses around New York City. The teenager gathered some of her poems into a collection and made copies to sell at poetry readings and in local bookstores.

In addition to poetry, Grimes developed a number of other artistic interests during her youth. "I've always wanted to be a writer, but I was also interested in pursuing other fields," she explained. "I was drawn to dance, theater, and music. For a while, I worried that maybe I had too many interests, but my dad told me to explore all of them. He said once I decided which medium I wanted to focus on, I'd be able to use everything I had learned along the way—and he was right!"

FAVORITE BOOKS AND AUTHORS

"I don't remember a favorite book in my early years, but I do remember one of the books that made an impact on me when I was about 12," Grimes stated. "It was *Death Be Not Proud* by John Gunther, and it stuck with me because the protagonist [main character] had great integrity. That's something that I try to inject into my characters."

Grimes was also influenced by the work of a number of African-American writers, including James Baldwin and Toni Morrison. She had the opportunity to meet Baldwin when she was 17, and the famous author became a mentor to her. "Baldwin taught me the importance of integrity in your work and, along with others, demonstrated the power of mastering your tools," she recalled.

EDUCATION

Grimes attended William Howard Taft High School in the Bronx borough of New York City. English was her best subject, and she enjoyed working on the literary journal in high school. She also continued writing poetry. In fact, her teachers sometimes caught her staring out the window and composing a poem in her head when she was supposed to be studying math or science.

Upon graduating from high school in the late 1960s, Grimes attended Rutgers University in New Jersey. During her college years, she published

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“So many people laughed at me when I said I wanted to be a writer! Even my mother thought it was a bad idea. But I learned to surround myself with people who shared my dream, or believed in me. That became very important. When I felt discouraged, I would remember that God had given me my talent, and I knew He wouldn’t let that talent go to waste! That kept me going.”

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poetry in literary journals. She earned a bachelor’s degree in African languages in 1974.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Today, Nikki Grimes is an award-winning author of more than 20 books. Her work includes picture books for children, novels for middle-grade readers and young adults, biographies of famous African-Americans, and poetry for people of all ages. Many of her books feature young African-Americans growing up in urban settings. Although Grimes focuses on creating strong characters that black readers can identify with, she also conveys universal themes about growing up, making friends, dealing with problems, and being part of a family. Despite the struggles she endured in her own childhood, her work is often called joyous and upbeat. Over the years, three of Grimes’s books have been honored as runners-up for the

Coretta Scott King Award, which is presented annually to the best work of children’s literature by an African-American writer. She finally claimed the prestigious award in 2003 for her novel *Bronx Masquerade*.

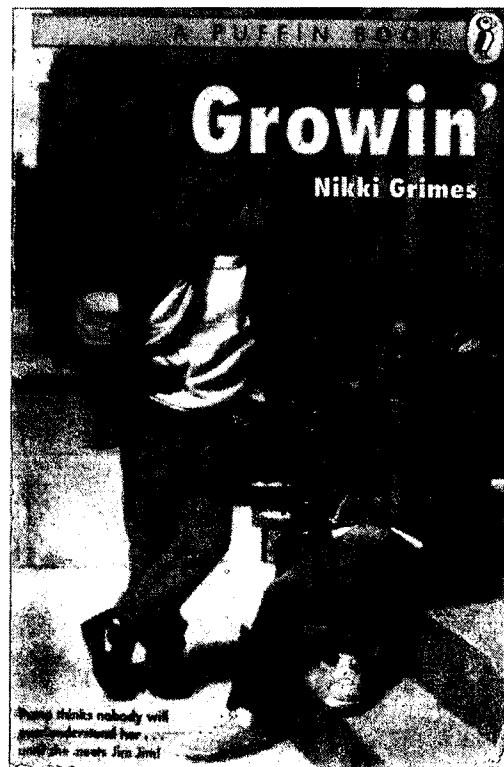
A Winding Path to a Writing Career

Although Grimes always wanted to become a professional writer, she traveled and worked in a variety of jobs before she finally made writing her career. Upon graduating from college, she accepted a grant from the Ford Foundation to go to Tanzania in East Africa for a year. She traveled around the country conducting research on the culture and language and collecting Tanzanian literature to translate. When Grimes returned to the United States in 1975, she began working as a free-lance journalist. She wrote reviews of art exhibits and plays—as well as profiles of actors, artists, and musicians—for a variety of magazines, including *Ms.* and *Essence*. “This was great work for me because I loved theater and, as a critic, I got in for free!” she remembered. “Sometimes I’d see four plays in one week.”

Grimes worked in several other jobs over the next few years. For example, she worked as a documentary photographer, library assistant, and radio scriptwriter and producer. Although some of her jobs provided valuable experience, she mostly viewed them as a way to earn money to support her writing. "There were practical problems, like how to earn money when I first got started," she recalled. "But one of the greatest obstacles was a lack of encouragement from others. So many people laughed at me when I said I wanted to be a writer! Even my mother thought it was a bad idea. But I learned to surround myself with people who shared my dream, or believed in me. That became very important. When I felt discouraged, I would remember that God had given me my talent, and I knew He wouldn't let that talent go to waste! That kept me going."

As Grimes continued writing during her spare time, she often found herself returning to a story that was inspired by her own childhood. She eventually realized that the story would make a good children's book. Since she knew very little about the field of children's literature, however, Grimes began reading children's books and writing reviews for magazines. This experience helped her learn about the industry and choose an appropriate publisher for her story.

Grimes's first children's book, *Growin'*, was published in 1977. It tells the story of Yolanda, an African-American girl who is known by the nickname Pump (short for Pumpkin). Pump writes poetry to express her feelings about her father's death and her mother's decision to move the family to a new neighborhood. She ends up making friends with the bully of her fifth-grade class, who shares her interest in poetry. The unlikely friends have a series of adventures and get into trouble. *Growin'* received a great deal of positive attention upon its release. It was named Children's Book of the Year by Bank Street College and listed among the best books of the year by the Child Study Association. Though some reviewers complained that Grimes could have developed her characters more fully, others enjoyed the focus on friendship.



In 1978 Grimes published her first book of poetry for children, *Something on My Mind*. It received critical praise for reflecting the experience of African-Americans in an urban environment as well as exploring the typical emotions of childhood. The illustrations by Tom Feelings were selected as runner-up for the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration. Despite the success of her early books, Grimes then took a break from writing. She

moved to Sweden for six years, where she worked as a translator and also once sang on the stage of the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra.

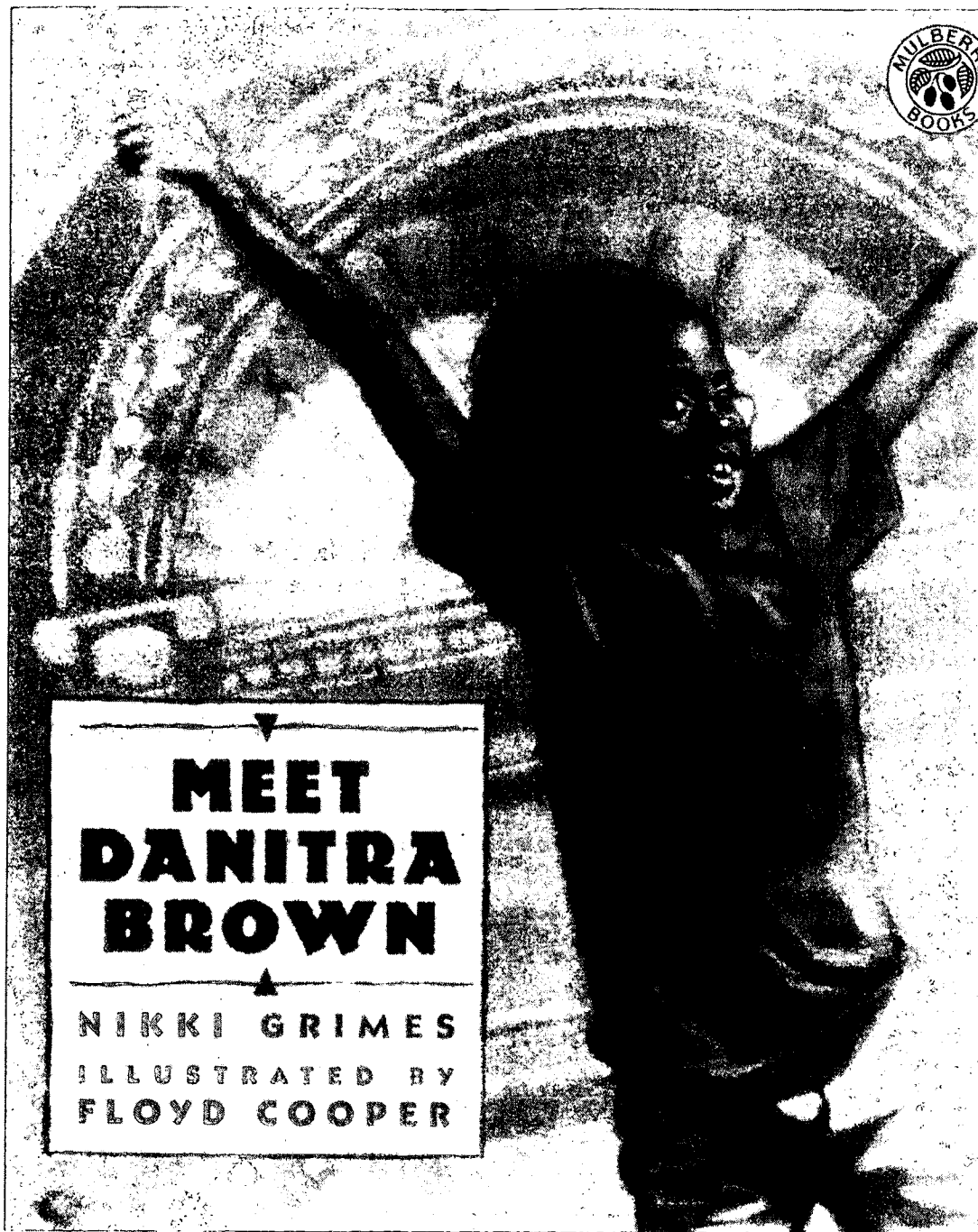
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“I tried working full-time and writing, working part-time and writing, temping [working in various jobs as a temporary employee] and writing. I never could build up enough momentum. Once I realized the only way I could write as much as I wanted was to make a living at it, that’s when I made up my mind to do just that. I knew it wouldn’t be easy, but I believed that with God, all things are possible.”

Becoming a Full-Time Writer

Upon returning to the United States in 1984, Grimes worked as a free-lance writer and editor. Over the next few years, she wrote several volumes in a series of books featuring well-known Disney characters. Finally, in 1991, Grimes dedicated herself to writing children’s books and poetry full-time. “I tried working full-time and writing, working part-time and writing, temping [working in various jobs as a temporary employee] and writing. I never could build up enough momentum,” she explained. “Once I realized the only way I could write as much as I wanted was to make a living at it, that’s when I made up my mind to do just that. I knew it wouldn’t be easy, but I believed that with God, all things are possible.”

In 1992 Grimes published *Malcolm X: A Force for Change*, a biography of the African-American civil rights activist written for middle-grade readers. The book follows Malcolm from his youth as a petty criminal to his emergence as a symbol of hope for black people during the civil rights movement. “Kids need to be exposed to the kind of person Malcolm was,” Grimes stated. “He never let his mistakes or past history keep him from moving forward. He didn’t make excuses or blame society for his problems.” Some reviewers praised Grimes for conveying the excitement surrounding her subject, while others criticized her for presenting difficult



issues without enough historical context. Despite the mixed reviews, *Malcolm X: A Force for Change* was a finalist in 1993 for an Image Award from the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).

Meet Danitra Brown

Grimes published one of her most popular collections of poetry for young people in 1994. *Meet Danitra Brown* features 13 poems in which the narra-

tor, an African-American girl named Zuri Jackson, sings the praises of her best friend, Danitra Brown. Zuri appreciates her friend's confidence and independent spirit. She tells how Danitra always wears purple because her mother once told her that purple was the color of the robes worn by African princesses. She also respects the way Danitra ignores neighbors who tease her about her thick glasses and insists that she will win a prize for her writing someday. *School Library Journal* contributor Barbara Osborne Williams called *Meet Danitra Brown* "A look at touching moments of friendship with universal appeal." Writing in *Booklist*, Hazel Rochman added that "We feel the girls' energy and their bond, in joyful games and in quiet times together." *Meet Danitra Brown* was selected as a Coretta Scott King Honor Book, a runner-up for the prestigious award.

In 2002 Grimes returned to these beloved characters in *Danitra Brown Leaves Town*. This collection of 13 poems follows Zuri and Danitra as they

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*"Moving from poetry
to prose was a giant step
outside of my comfort zone.
To overcome that obstacle,
I treated the first third of the
book [Jazmin's Notebook]
as if it were a collection of
poetry, writing each chapter
like a long poem, casting
the sentences accordingly.*

*Only after each chapter
was complete did I reformat
the work as prose. By the
second third of the book,
I was once again comfortable
enough with prose to
write it directly."*

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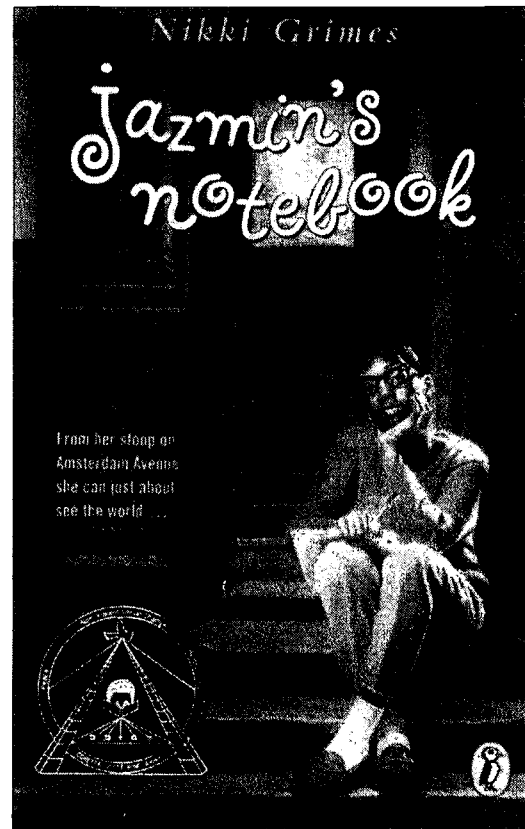
spend a summer apart. At first Zuri is hurt when her best friend goes to visit relatives in the country while she must remain in the city. But the two girls remain close by exchanging letters about their very different summer experiences. The letters are made up of poems written in simple free verse. A writer for *Kirkus Reviews* said that *Danitra Brown Leaves Town* "will resonate with many young readers who have savored the pleasures of Fourth of July fireworks, picnics and games, block parties, starry summer nights, and family reunions."

Jazmin's Notebook

Grimes earned a second Coretta Scott King Honor Book Award in 1998 for her young adult novel *Jazmin's Notebook*. Based on her own experience, this book tells the story of an African-American teenager named Jazmin who endures a difficult childhood in the 1960s. Her father dies, and her mother is sent to a mental hospital. Jazmin lives in a series of foster homes until

she finally moves into a small apartment in Harlem with her protective older sister, CeCe. Jazmin copes with her problems by writing poetry and sharing her thoughts with her journal. "An articulate, admirable heroine, Jazmin leaps over life's hurdles with agility and integrity," wrote a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*.

Grimes faced two major challenges in writing *Jazmin's Notebook*: composing poems in Jazmin's voice, and writing a novel after focusing on poetry for many years. "Moving from poetry to prose was a giant step outside of my comfort zone," she recalled. "To overcome that obstacle, I treated the first third of the book as if it were a collection of poetry, writing each chapter like a long poem, casting the sentences accordingly. Only after each chapter was complete did I reformat the work as prose. By the second third of the book, I was once again comfortable enough with prose to write it directly."



Grimes challenged herself in a new way while writing her 1999 book *Aneesa Lee and the Weaver's Gift*. This collection of 13 related poems uses the craft of weaving to explore the life of Aneesa Lee, a talented young girl of mixed African-American and Japanese heritage. "I wanted to create a book with an element of story in which the basics of the weaver's craft were made both intelligible and interesting for young readers," the author stated. "The story of Aneesa Lee follows her through the process of weaving cloth, from spinning yarn and dyeing it, to beating the threads into place, to removing the cloth from the loom. Along the way, we learn about Aneesa as a character, about her nearest relatives, and how their love for each other weaves them together as a family." *Aneesa Lee and the Weaver's Gift* received positive reviews and won a Parents' Choice Gold Award. "For adult weavers, the book will be a treasure, and for children, it serves as a glimpse into the intricacies not only of weaving, but the patterns of daily life," wrote a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*.

Bronx Masquerade

Grimes's next book, the young adult novel *Bronx Masquerade* (2002), has proven to be her most successful book yet. *Bronx Masquerade* follows 18 ethnically diverse high school students in the Bronx. Their teacher, Mr. Ward, teaches them about the Harlem Renaissance—a period of artistic growth in African-American literature that took place during the 1920s in Harlem, a section of New York City. When Mr. Ward assigns the class to write a final essay on the topic, one student suggests that they be allowed to compose poetry instead. The poetry assignment is so popular that the class starts holding weekly poetry slams. All the students reveal their private dreams and struggles in their poetry, which helps them overcome their differences and come together as a group.

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In Bronx Masquerade, Grimes explained, “I wanted to explore the interior landscapes of a diverse group of characters, and I believed poetry to be the most effective way to get to the heart of those characters.”

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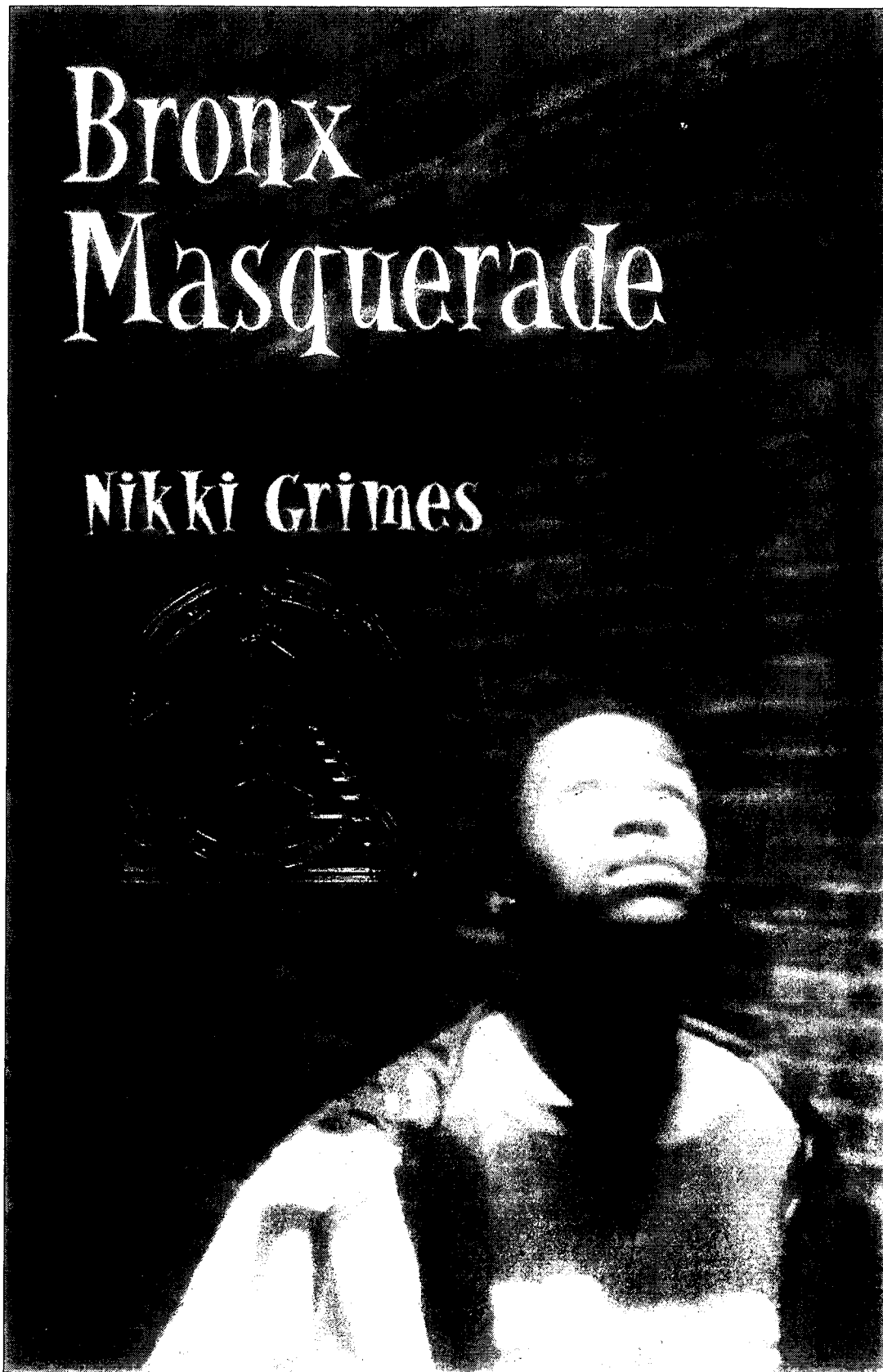
Grimes got the idea for *Bronx Masquerade* by visiting a California high school class taught by her friend and fellow writer, Drew Ward. Ward and Grimes were both founding members of Montage, a group of artists and writers that got together to critique each other's work. Grimes noted that the toughest part of writing the book was writing poetry in the distinct voices of 18 different students. “I wanted to explore the interior landscapes of a diverse group of characters,” she explained, “and I believed poetry to be the most effective way to get to the heart of those characters.”

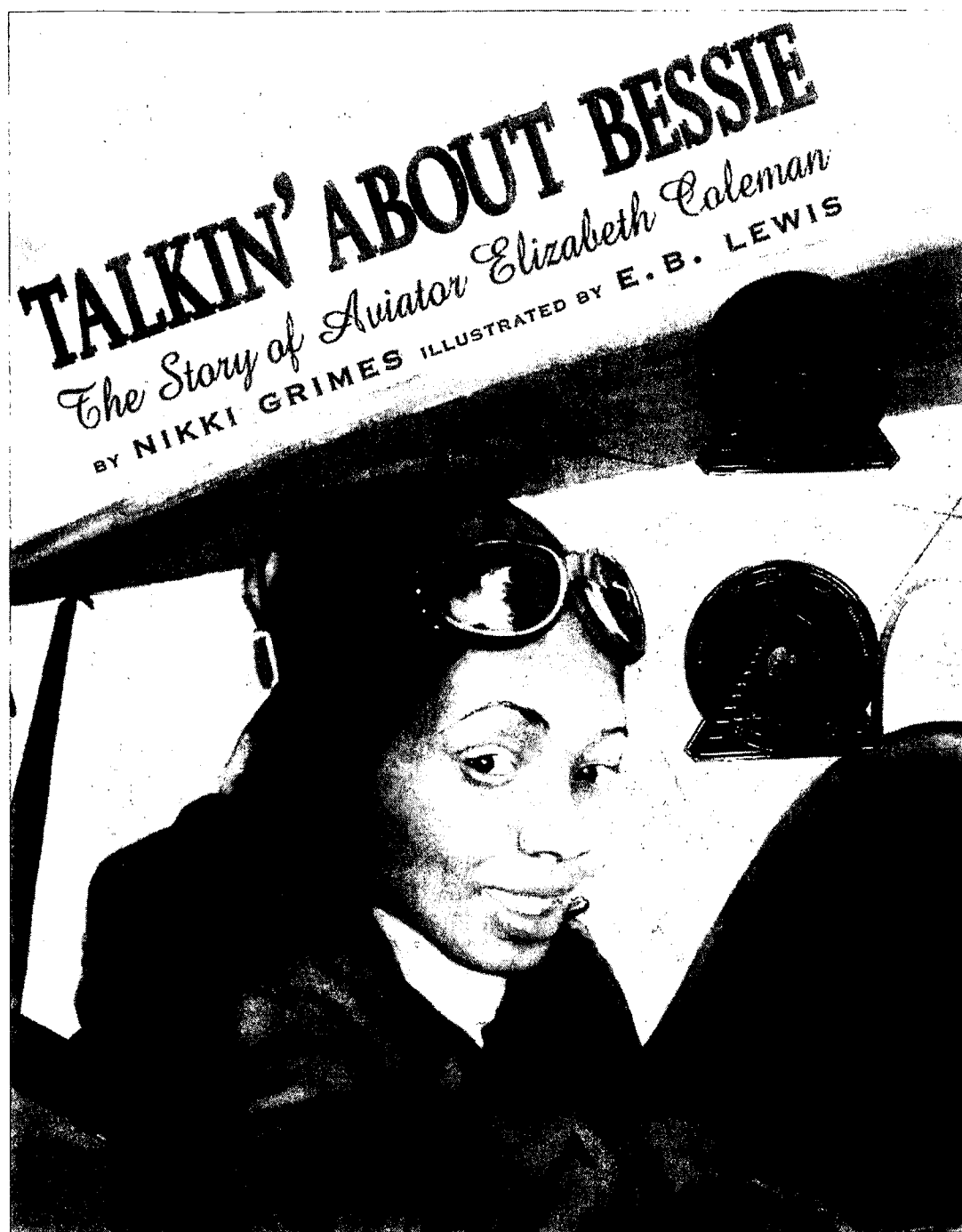
Bronx Masquerade proved popular among readers and critics alike. A writer for *School Library Journal* called the novel “a flowing, rhythmic portrait of the diversity and individuality of teen characters in a classroom,” adding that “Grimes gives young people exactly what they're looking for—real characters who show them they are not alone.” After two near misses, Grimes won her first Coretta Scott King Award from the American Library Association for her novel *Bronx Masquerade*. The American Library Association noted that “Grimes boldly offers a glimpse into the heart and suffering of each student, who like many contemporary youth, struggle to discover their identity.”

Grimes said that she hoped young adults would take away the following messages from the book: “Be true to yourself; never judge a book by its

Bronx Masquerade

Nikki Grimes





cover; realize we are all complex individuals, more alike than we are different; and poetry is a powerful tool for self-expression, and self-exploration."

Other Books

Adding to the thrill of winning her first Coretta Scott King Award, Grimes accomplished a rare feat by also claiming the Coretta Scott King Honor Book Award the same year for her 2002 book *Talkin' about Bessie: The Story*

of *Aviator Elizabeth Coleman*. "I was blown away," she recalled. "It's very rare that anyone wins an award and an honor." This fictionalized biography tells the inspiring story of the first black woman to fly an airplane. Born in Texas in 1892, Coleman worked in the cotton fields but still managed to complete her education. She became determined to learn to fly, but found out that American flight schools only accepted white male students. She taught herself French and sailed to France, where she became an accomplished pilot and flight instructor. She died in a plane crash in 1926, at the age of 34. Grimes presents the details of Coleman's life through a series of 20 poetic speeches by mourners at her funeral. Writing in *Black Issues Book Review*, Lynda Jones called the book "a rich and loving account of one young woman's desire to follow her dream, and the joy of having done that."

Grimes's body of work also includes a number of picture books for children. Her 1999 book *My Man Blue*, for example, is a story told in verse about a fatherless African-American boy and his developing relationship with a rough-looking man named Blue. Her 2001 book *A Pocketful of Poems* is a celebration of words and wordplay. In a review for *Booklist*, GraceAnne DeCandido stated that "There's so much vibrant energy and freshness [that] the book will dance into the hearts of children right away."

Religion has been a frequent topic of Grimes's work over the years. In her 1996 poetry collection *Come Sunday*, for example, a bright young girl named LaTasha describes the exciting sights and sounds of Paradise Baptist Church. In her 2002 poetry collection *When Daddy Prays*, a small boy watches how his father's religious faith affects his life. "Brimming with love and faith, Grimes's poems celebrate a father's devotion as seen through the eyes of his child," Patricia Pearl Dole wrote in *School Library Journal*. "Conversational, simple, and deeply moving, they stress the man's reliance on God in all aspects of his life."

Enjoying the Challenge of Writing

Grimes typically writes between three and six books each year. She writes in the morning six days per week and spends the afternoons talking with

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*"Even when the narratives
I write are not historically
true, they're always emotion-
ally true. In other words,
I write about feelings I've
felt, fears I've wrestled with,
dreams that have filled my
imagination."*

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editors or attending poetry readings or book signings. Grimes does not have a formal office, but instead writes "all over the house. Have pen, will travel! I also take a pad with me on morning walks and jot down notes along the way. I've been known to compose whole poems that way."

Grimes feels a strong need to write. "Stories rise up in me demanding to be told, and I obey," she said. "I feel fortunate that the people I share my stories with seem to enjoy and learn from them." Most of her work is

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"Like many African-American authors, I strive to create positive images, to counteract negative stereotypes of the African-American community, and to explore a greater depth of character than the media generally assigns people of African descent. But every time I put pen to paper, I'm also writing to stretch myself. Otherwise, I feel I'm not doing my job."

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drawn from her own experiences, especially those of her childhood. "In general, my fiction is autobiographical. My life and travels have been difficult, but, in surmounting those difficulties, I have learned much that I wish to share. There's no better way to do that than through my work," she explained. "Even when the narratives I write are not historically true, they're always emotionally true. In other words, I write about feelings I've felt, fears I've wrestled with, dreams that have filled my imagination."

Grimes feels a strong sense of responsibility in writing for a young audience. She views her books as "a last chance to impact the next generation to be sent out into the world. It's a challenge, a joy, and a great responsibility." As an African-American writer, Grimes feels a special need to connect with readers who share her ethnic background. "The responsibility for creating quality literature and

learning materials for black children rests with the black writer," she stated. "I, for one, have accepted that responsibility and, while I do not write for children alone, I write for children first."

In each of her books, Grimes tries to incorporate something new in order to challenge herself and her readers. "Easy doesn't interest me," she declared. "It never did. In art, and in life, I'm a sucker for a challenge. I like to take on work that frightens me, that I'm not sure I can pull off, that makes me dig deep. It isn't enough to write with a mandate, although I do. Like many African-American authors, I strive to create positive im-

ages, to counteract negative stereotypes of the African-American community, and to explore a greater depth of character than the media generally assigns people of African descent. But every time I put pen to paper, I'm also writing to stretch myself. Otherwise, I feel I'm not doing my job."

HOME AND FAMILY

Grimes lived in Seattle, Washington, for several years after she became a full-time writer. In 1999 she moved to Corona, California, to be near her colleagues in the Montage artists' group. She is unmarried and had one daughter, Tawfiqa, who is now deceased.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

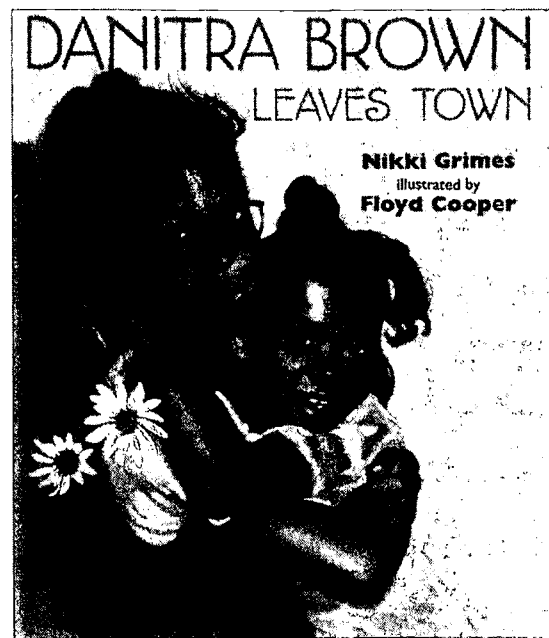
Grimes enjoys a number of hobbies in her free time, including reading, cooking, walking, and playing word games. She also travels widely. "I inherited my father's passion for travel, and have been to such places as China, Russia, Austria, Trinidad, and Tanzania," she noted. The six years she spent living in Sweden introduced her to her favorite hobby, knitting. She recently began incorporating knitting into works of fiber art, including beaded sweaters and jewelry and handmade cards.

SELECTED WRITINGS

Poetry

- Something on My Mind*, 1978
- From a Child's Heart*, 1993
- Meet Danitra Brown*, 1994
- C Is for City*, 1995
- Come Sunday*, 1996
- It's Raining Laughter*, 1997
- A Dime a Dozen*, 1998
- Aneesa Lee and the Weaver's Gift*, 1999
- Hopscotch Love: A Family Treasury of Love Poems*, 1999
- My Man Blue*, 1999
- A Pocketful of Poems*, 2000
- Is It Far to Zanzibar? Poems of Tanzania*, 2000
- Shoe Magic*, 2000
- Stepping Out with Grandma Mac*, 2000
- When Daddy Prays*, 2000

Danitra Brown Leaves Town, 2002
*Under the Tree: Poems of
Christmas*, 2002



Fiction

Growin', 1977
Wild, Wild Hair, 1996
Jazmin's Notebook, 1998
At Break of Day, 1999
Bronx Masquerade, 2002

Nonfiction

Malcolm X: A Force for Change,
1992
*Talkin' about Bessie: The Story of
Aviator Elizabeth Coleman*, 2002

HONORS AND AWARDS

Children's Book of the Year (Bank Street College): 1977, for *Growin'*; 1998,
for *Jazmin's Notebook*
Best Books of the Year (Child Study Association): 1977, for *Growin'*
Notable Book (American Library Association): 1978, for *Something on My
Mind*; 1994, for *Meet Danitra Brown*; 1997, for *Come Sunday*
Benjamin Franklin Picture Book Award: 1994, for *From a Child's Heart*
Parents' Choice Gold Award: 1999, for *Aneesa Lee and the Weaver's Gift*
Coretta Scott King Award (American Library Association): 2003, for *Bronx
Masquerade*
Kerlan Award (Kerlan Collection of Children's Literature, University of
Minnesota): 2003

FURTHER READING

Books

Contemporary Authors, Vols. 77-80, 1979
Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Vol. 60, 1998
Eighth Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators, 2000
St. James Guide to Children's Writers, 1999 .
Something about the Author, Vol. 93, 1997
Who's Who among African Americans, 2002

Periodicals

Book Links, Sep. 1999, p.46

Houston Chronicle, Feb. 9, 2003, p.19

Riverside (Calif.) Press Enterprise, Nov. 6, 1999, p.B1; Feb. 17, 2000, p.D1;
Feb. 24, 2003, p.B1

School Librarian's Workshop, Apr. 2001, p.5

Time for Kids, Feb. 2003, p.8

Online Articles

<http://www.penguinputnam.com>

(*PenguinPuntam.com*, "Interview with Nikki Grimes on *Bronx Masquerade*," Spring 2002)

Online Databases

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, articles from *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2003; *St. James Guide to Children's Writers*, 1999; and *Who's Who among African Americans*, 2002

ADDRESS

Nikki Grimes

Penguin Putnam Young Readers Group

345 Hudson Street

New York, NY 10014

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.nikkigrimes.com>

<http://www.visitingauthors.com>

<http://www.penguinputnam.com>



Laura Hillenbrand 1967-

American Writer

Author of the Award-Winning Nonfiction Book

Seabiscuit: An American Legend

BIRTH

Laura Hillenbrand was born on May 15, 1967, in Fairfax, Virginia. Her father, Bernard Hillenbrand, was a lobbyist (a person who tries to influence legislators on behalf of a client or employer) who later became a Methodist minister. Her mother, Elizabeth Hillenbrand, was a journalist for the *Washington Post* and then a psychiatrist. Laura was the youngest of four chil-

dren in her family. She has two sisters and a brother. Her parents divorced when she was nine years old.

YOUTH

Hillenbrand grew up in Bethesda, Maryland, a comfortable suburb of Washington, D.C. An active and healthy child, she engaged in a wide assortment of sports, including competitive tennis and swimming. But her favorite outdoor pursuit was horseback riding, a skill she picked up at an early age.

Hillenbrand traces her early love for horses and horseback riding to the weekends and summers she spent on her father's family farm in Sharpsburg, Maryland. The farm was located right next to Antietam National Battlefield, a historic park that was the site of one of the greatest battles of the American Civil War. Hillenbrand and her older siblings spent many afternoons exploring the peaceful grounds of the park, and they occasionally found bullets, belt buckles, and other artifacts left behind from the 1862 battle. But she spent most of her free time tending horses in the barn or riding them across the farm's wide green pastures.

According to Hillenbrand, most of the horses her family acquired came from owners who had abused or neglected them. A horse lover himself, Bernard Hillenbrand became known for his willingness to take in horses that no one else wanted. This kindness gave Hillenbrand an opportunity to develop her deep love and understanding of horses. "We had a kind of mini herd of horses," she recalled. "My sister [Susan] and I would ride them, bareback. One horse, a stallion, who really had been abused and did not want to be ridden . . . well, I rode him and I got thrown. I must have skidded on my face because I lost an eyebrow and who knows how much other skin! We just rode them, no helmets, no tack. Later I did some showing [at horse riding competitions], got a few ribbons. I just loved horses for the joy of riding. When you learn to ride bareback, with twine for a bridle, you become pretty unthrowable."

As Hillenbrand grew older, she often used money she earned from babysitting to buy bus tickets to area racetracks. She spent hours at the tracks, marveling at the speed and grace of the horses as they pounded past her seat in the grandstand. On one occasion, she and her sister Susan even combined all of their savings to rescue a horse by themselves. They learned that the owner of a neglected three-year-old filly with an infection was about to sell her to a slaughterhouse rather than pay a veterinarian to treat her problems. Horrified at the thought of the horse being sent to its death, "Susan and I dreamed up a little scheme," Hillenbrand said. "We

covered the horse in mud to make her look really bad. Then we had all the grooms and everyone just attach themselves to the extremities of the owner and beg him to sell the horse to us instead of the slaughter dealer. . . . We sold everything we had and drained our babysitting accounts to buy this horse, and it was very much worth it."

The Hillenbrand girls took the filly home to the family farm, where they gave it the name Allspice and set about nourishing it back to health. "She was a skeleton, but she pulled out and was so sweet," she remembered. "She blossomed into an extraordinarily beautiful creature who bonded with us the way dogs sometimes bond to their owners." Allspice often fol-

lowed the family car down the driveway, and she became excited whenever a member of the Hillenbrand family approached the pasture. As she grew older she even learned to turn the outside doorknobs of the farmhouse with her lips, enabling her to poke her head in and whinny greetings to the family as they gathered around the dinner table. "We lost her a couple years later to a terrible illness called Potomac Fever, but she was the most wonderful animal I've ever had in my life," Hillenbrand recalled. "Even today, I still get emotional about her death."

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EDUCATION

Hillenbrand attended school in Bethesda, where she often felt lost in a sea of other students. These feelings were particularly intense in her large high school. During those years, she recalled that she and her classmates seemed like "herds of bison moving through the hallways to get from one class to another. People didn't take notice of individual students, so whatever talents people had — and whatever problems people were having — were overlooked."



Seabiscuit and Red Pollard.

After earning her high school diploma in the spring of 1985, Hillenbrand enrolled at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. Looking back, she describes her decision to attend Kenyon as "the best [one] I ever made in my life. . . . Kenyon turned me around and started my life in the direction it's gone ever since," she explained. "I became a straight-A student as soon as I got there, and I'd never been that before and never thought I would be that. I had a feeling of being supported the entire time I was there." Hillenbrand found a particularly strong mentor in Megan Macomber, who was one of her English instructors. "She was the first person in my life who told me, 'You should be writing, this should be what you do with your life,'" she said. "It really inspired me. I still have the note she wrote telling me that."

By her sophomore year, Hillenbrand had decided to major in English and history in hopes of building a career as a history teacher. In addition, she enjoyed a vibrant social life outside of the classroom, and she continued to swim, play tennis, and go horseback riding on a regular basis.

On her way back to college at the end of spring break in March 1987, however, Hillenbrand became violently ill. She assumed that she was suffering from a severe case of food poisoning, but by the time she reached the

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“Everything I ate made my abdomen balloon. I radiated heat, and my joints and muscles felt bruised. Every day on the way to classes, I struggled a little harder to make it up the hill behind my apartment. Eventually, I began stopping halfway to rest against the trunk of a tree.”

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Kenyon campus she was in such terrible condition that friends frantically called paramedics for emergency assistance. Over the next several days, her health steadily worsened. “Everything I ate made my abdomen balloon,” she recalled in the *New Yorker*. “I radiated heat, and my joints and muscles felt bruised. Every day on the way to classes, I struggled a little harder to make it up the hill behind my apartment. Eventually, I began stopping halfway to rest against the trunk of a tree.”

After three weeks, Hillenbrand became so weak that she was not even able to sit up in bed by herself. At that point, doctors were unable to diagnose or treat her illness. She soon became so sick that it was impossible for her to attend class or pursue her

studies. She finally came to the bitter conclusion that she would have to return home until she felt better. Unfortunately, Hillenbrand still struggles with her health, and she was never able to resume her college education.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Hillenbrand has written numerous articles about horse racing over the years, but she is best-known for her 2001 book *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*. This work tells the remarkable story of Seabiscuit, a racehorse that rose out of obscurity to become one of the most famous figures in American sports history. A critically acclaimed bestseller, *Seabiscuit* was also adapted into a major motion picture in 2003. But in many respects, Hillenbrand’s battle to produce the book is just as inspiring as the story of Seabiscuit and the men who nurtured him to greatness.

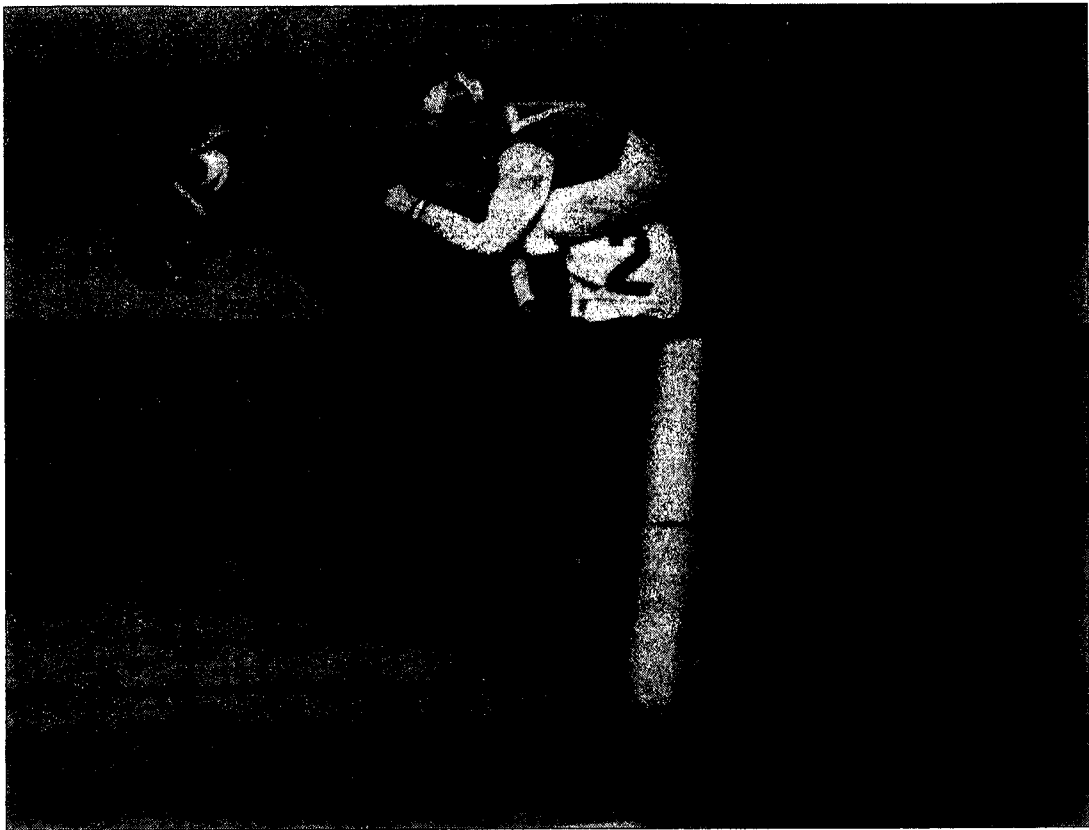


Seabiscuit, wearing the victory flower garland, is shown with Red Pollard after winning at Suffolk Downs in Boston on August 7, 1937.

Struggling with CFS

After Hillenbrand was struck down by illness in March 1987, she wondered if she would ever be able to build an independent life for herself. "A walk to the mailbox on the corner left me so tired that I had to lie down," she wrote in a *New Yorker* article about her illness. "Sometimes I'd look at words or pictures but see only meaningless shapes. I'd stare at clocks and not understand what the positions of the hands meant. . . . In conversation, I'd think of one word but say something completely unrelated: 'hotel' became 'plankton'; 'cup' came out 'elastic.' I couldn't hang on to a thought long enough to carry it through a sentence. When I tried to cross the street, the motion of the cars became so disorienting that I couldn't move."

In addition, Hillenbrand struggled to deal with the attitudes of people who doubted the severity of her illness. "I had difficulties with just about everyone taking it seriously at first," she remembered. "I definitely had a lot of problems with people thinking that this is some sort of hypochondria or some sort of willful attempt to get attention." As the months passed by, many of her most valued friendships faded away. "After one or two get-well cards I stopped hearing from [my friends]," she said. "Now and then, I



Red Pollard on Seabiscuit, at the Yonkers Handicap at Empire City Race Track on July 24, 1937. Seabiscuit's winning time of 1:44 broke a track record that had stood for 20 years.

called people I had known in high school. The conversations were awkward and halting, and I felt foolish. No one knew what to say. Everyone had heard rumors that I was sick. Someone had heard I had AIDS. Another heard I was pregnant. . . . I was ashamed and angry and indescribably lonely."

After nearly a year of tests and visits with various doctors, Hillenbrand was finally diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). "Strangely enough, it was a wonderful day," she said. "I finally knew what I had and that I probably wasn't going to die." Still, the diagnosis left her full of doubts about her future. The cause of CFS is unknown, although many researchers believe that it involves a breakdown in the immune system. A cure for the mysterious illness has yet to be found. An estimated 800,000 people suffer from the disease, most of them women. Hillenbrand knew that some people suffering from CFS grow stronger over the course of years and are able to lead fairly normal lives. But she was also aware that some people with CFS spend the rest of their lives unable to perform such basic tasks such as walking up stairs or making dinner for themselves.

Unfortunately, Hillenbrand was gripped by a particularly crippling case of CFS. Living at home with her mother, she was confined to home for months and even years at a time, and she found that the disease “expressed itself not only as debilitating exhaustion, at times bordering on near paralysis, but also as crippling vertigo.” Hillenbrand explained how the vertigo [dizziness] made her feel: “The room appears to be moving and flexing all the time. . . . The floor feels like it’s pitching up and down. Sometimes [I feel like] I’m spinning. Sometimes my eyes actually roll involuntarily to the left. So reading and writing is actually very difficult, which is an especially cruel punishment for an author.”

The early 1990s marked a particularly depressing period in her life. From 1991 to 1993, Hillenbrand spent virtually all of her time in bed, but vertigo made it impossible for her to read or write. “For as long as two months at a time, I couldn’t get down the stairs,” she said in the *New Yorker*. “The smallest exertion plunged me into a ‘crash.’ First, my legs would weaken and I’d lose the strength to stand. Then I wouldn’t be able to sit up. My arms would go next, and I’d be unable to lift them. I couldn’t roll over. Soon, I would lose the strength to speak. Only my eyes were capable of movement. At the bottom of each breath, I would wonder if I’d be able to draw the next one.”

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Building a Career as a Writer

Despite the devastating effects of CFS, Hillenbrand was determined to build a career for herself. She knew that she could not handle a regular office job, so she decided to make a living as a freelance writer. Beginning in 1988, she wrote articles on such subjects as veterinary medicine, horse racing, and other topics related to horses. She even wrote pieces on the U.S. government’s policies on wild horse populations and scandals in the horse show industry. But Hillenbrand concealed her illness from the magazines for which she wrote. She worried that her writing assignments would dry up if the editors knew about her frail physical condition.

By 1995 Hillenbrand had become a recognized authority on horses and horse racing. She even became a contributing editor and writer for *Equus*, a prestigious magazine targeted at riders, trainers, breeders, and veterinarians of horses. As a member of the *Equus* staff, Hillenbrand tackled a wide range of issues in her writing. But she was always drawn back to her life-long love of horse racing. "The racetrack is a universe unto itself," she said. "There is no place like it in the world, in the sports world or in any other part of the world, because it's a world predicated on risk. Everybody there is

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"Seabiscuit was an unlikely champion. He was a rough-hewn, undersized horse with a sad little tail and knees that wouldn't straighten all the way. At a gallop, he jabbed one foreleg sideways, as if he were swatting flies. For two years, he fought his trainers and floundered at the lowest level of racing, misunderstood and mishandled."

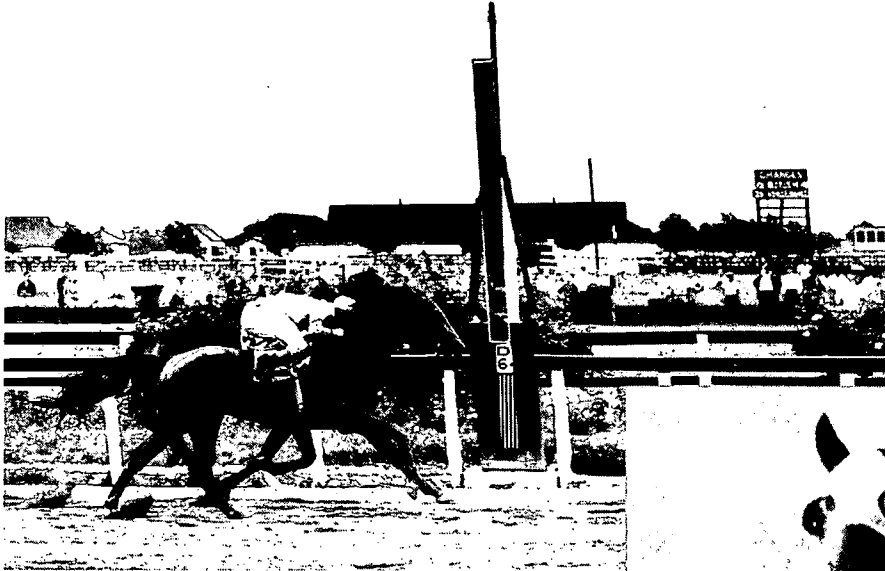
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investing in a gamble, whether they're putting \$2 on a racehorse or getting on the back of a racehorse and riding him."

In 1996 Hillenbrand left her mother's house to move into a small apartment in Washington, D.C. She still could not do many of the everyday activities that healthy people take for granted, but by this time she felt as healthy as she had in years. She took brief walks around her neighborhood, and even managed to go grocery shopping by herself. "I had lived for so long in silence and isolation that the world was a sensory explosion," she recalled. "After years of seeing people almost exclusively on television, I found their three-dimensionality startling: the light playing off their faces, the complexity of their hands, the strange electric feel of their nearness."

Learning about Seabiscuit

In 1997 Hillenbrand decided to write an article about Seabiscuit, a famous racehorse that competed on tracks across the United States during the late 1930s. As a young horse, Seabiscuit had shown no talent on the track. In fact, he lost his first 17 races. "Seabiscuit was an unlikely champion," Hillenbrand wrote. "He was a rough-hewn, undersized horse with a sad little tail and knees that wouldn't straighten all the way. At a gallop, he jabbed one foreleg sideways, as if he were swatting flies. For two years, he fought his trainers and floundered at the lowest level of racing, misunderstood and mishandled."



Seabiscuit and War Admiral in their match race at Pimlico in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 1, 1938. Seabiscuit beat War Admiral, the winner of the 1937 Triple Crown, finishing four lengths ahead and setting a new track record. Ironically, in this famous race, Seabiscuit was ridden not by Pollard, who was recovering from injuries at the time, but instead by jockey George Woolf.





Owner Charles Howard (left) and trainer Tom Smith (right) are pictured with Seabiscuit and jockey George Woolf after Seabiscuit beat War Admiral.

But the horse's fortunes changed forever after a wealthy automobile dealer named Charles Howard purchased him on a hunch. Over the next several months, Howard hired a mysterious horse trainer named Tom Smith and a half-blind, failed prizefighter and struggling jockey named Red Pollard (as well as other jockeys) to explore Seabiscuit's potential. During the late 1930s Smith and Pollard tapped into the horse's incredible talent and competitive fire, and by 1938 Seabiscuit was the most famous racehorse in America. In fact, newspapers devoted more space to the thoroughbred than they did to such major world figures as U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt or German leader Adolf Hitler. In late 1938, Seabiscuit capped his amazing rise to greatness by facing off against War Admiral in a two-horse race. The towering War Admiral had just claimed horse racing's Triple Crown by winning the three most prestigious horse races in the United States: the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes, and the Belmont Stakes. Many people thought that Seabiscuit's spunky spirit would be no match for War Admiral's power and speed. But Seabiscuit defeated War Admiral in a pulse-pounding race that captured the imagination of the entire country. Ironically, in this famous race, Seabiscuit was ridden not by

Pollard, who was recovering from injuries at the time, but instead by jockey George Woolf.

Hillenbrand's article on Seabiscuit, called "Four Good Legs Between Us," appeared in the July/August 1998 issue of *American Heritage* magazine. Her account of Seabiscuit's rise to fame received the prestigious Eclipse Award, the highest prize in the world of equestrian journalism. It also prompted numerous book publishers and filmmakers to rush to her door. The publishing houses believed that a book-length treatment of the Seabiscuit story would be popular with readers, while the film studios thought that the dramatic tale might be irresistible to moviegoers.

Hillenbrand was delighted by the attention. Within a matter of weeks she signed contracts with both a book publisher (Random House) and a film studio (Universal). In fact, she signed both deals before she even started writing the *Seabiscuit* book. "It was initially frightening," she admitted. "People think I must have been turning cartwheels on the night I sealed the movie deal—which was only two days after sealing the book deal—but I was really quite terrified. . . . I think if I had been writing fiction, where the work is entirely dependent on the writer's creativity and the potential directions the narrative might take are infinite, I might have frozen. But with nonfiction, the task is very straightforward: Do the research, tell the story. Having a lot of people suddenly depending on me to get the job done was a marvelous motivator. The book and movie deals seemed to flip a switch in my head, and off I went."

Writing *Seabiscuit*

As the months passed by, Hillenbrand conducted dozens of telephone interviews. She also used the U.S. Library of Congress's lending program to borrow old newspapers and magazines from the Seabiscuit era. In addition, she read countless biographies of horses, jockeys, and trainers of the

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As Hillenbrand explored every aspect of the lives of Seabiscuit and the men who helped make him a champion horse, she realized that "this is the kind of story you wait your whole career to tell. I couldn't believe the kind of story that was tumbling out of my research. . . . Every morning I woke up happy because I knew I was going to spend the day with these men and with this horse."

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“Horses are just as complicated emotionally as people are; they come in just as many varieties of personality. And they react to the world in a way that’s similar to us. . . . I have absolute conviction that racehorses love to compete. They do it on their own; if you leave them alone, they’ll all race each other all day. And you can see it in their body language when they’re out there on the track. They cannot wait to get going. They love this stuff.”

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Indeed, Hillenbrand did not want to just tell the story of Seabiscuit. She also wanted to explore the lives of trainer Tom Smith and jockey Red Pollard. “Smith had a rare gift for understanding horses and knowing how to work with them,” she explained. “Seabiscuit was completely transformed by this man.” Pollard, meanwhile, helped unlock Seabiscuit’s talent despite suffering from a series of terrible injuries. “Red and I have something in common—the frailty of our bodies,” Hillenbrand commented. “I understood his frustration and pain and his willingness to sacrifice his well-being to achieve something.”

In addition, Hillenbrand wanted to explore other themes and subjects in her book. For example, she hoped to give readers a glimpse of the intelligence and spirit that horses possess. “I’ve spent a huge amount of time with horses, and in the company of animals, my whole life,” she explained. “And the more time you spend with them, the more you start seeing the analogies between your-

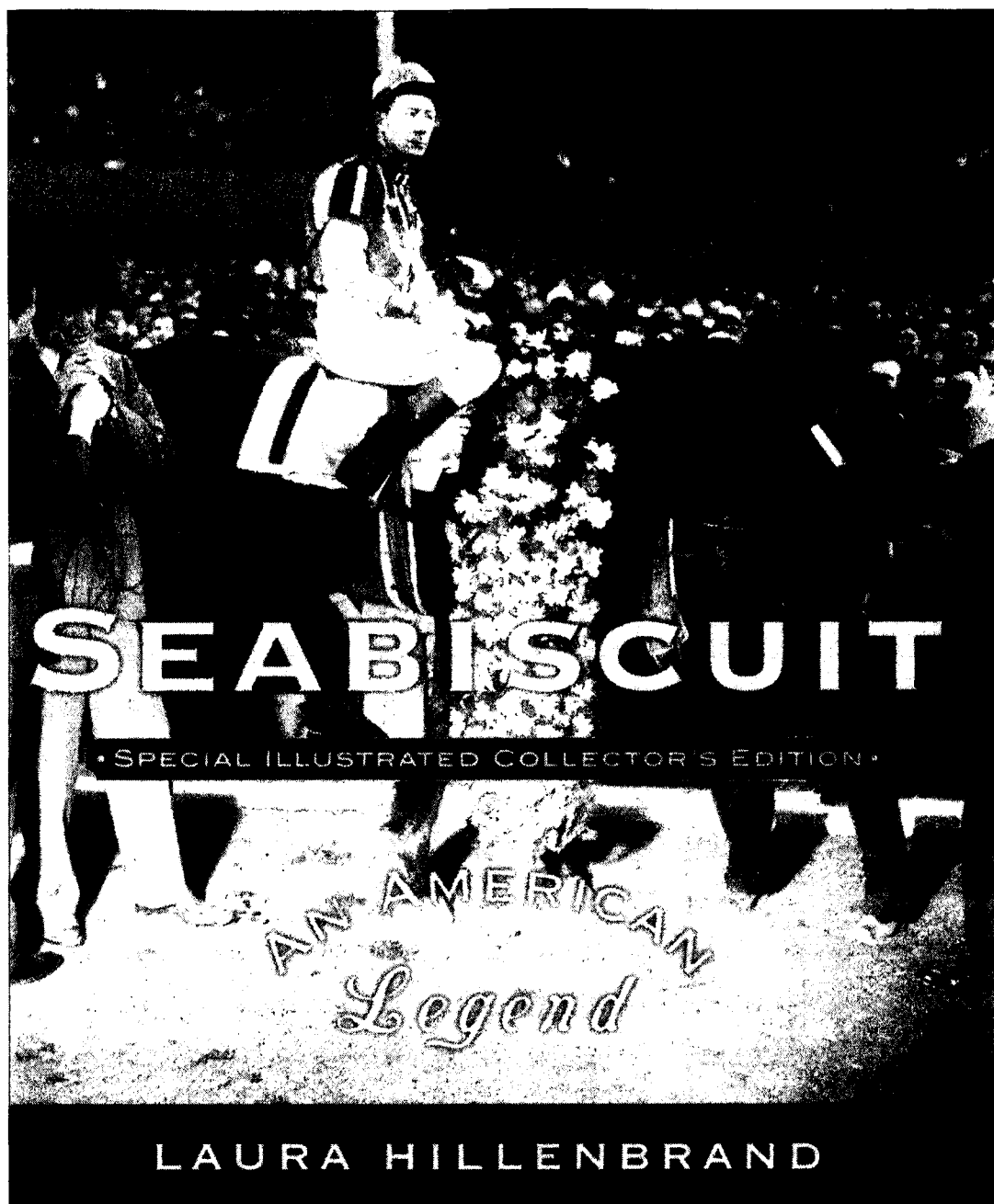
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Seabiscuit nibbles on the hand of owner Charles Howard.

Hillenbrand also wanted to show readers that Seabiscuit came along during a period of American history in which people were desperate for heroic figures. Seabiscuit rose to fame during the final years of the Great Depression, a time of great economic pain and hardship. Many American families struggled to earn money for basic necessities like food, clothing, and shelter. "I wanted to give people a feel for what it was like," she said. "In terms of Seabiscuit, there are periods in history where people are looking for certain attributes. There are conditions in society where they want certain things. He came along in the depths of the Depression and people were looking for Cinderella stories that they could identify with. The average per capita income in the U.S. when he started running was \$432 a year. So people were really in desperate shape. They were looking for somebody who was down and out like they were that they could identify with who could rise to the top. And this is true of the owner, trainer, and jockey as well. And when he came along something clicked, and he ceased to be just a racehorse running on the track. For the time he was running, he was a proxy [symbol] for a nation."

Finally, Hillenbrand wanted to give readers a sense of horse racing's importance in American society during the 1930s. "It was rapidly becoming



the most popular spectator sport by attendance in the country," she noted. By the time Seabiscuit met War Admiral in their famous race, Hillenbrand claims that "the whole nation [was] wrapped up in this rivalry. It was the perfect sell, this match, and the country was simply enthralled by the rivalry."

A Runaway Bestseller

In 2001 Random House published *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*. The book was immediately snapped up by readers across the country, and within

three weeks of its release it was the top-selling nonfiction book in the nation. "I hoped it would be a best seller," Hillenbrand admitted. "I knew the story was a really good story, and the fact that *American Heritage*, a straight history magazine which was not horsy at all, had thought it was a good story helped. And the thirst for the underdog story is a market that never dies. This is the greatest underdog story in history, I think that is a big part of its appeal."

Seabiscuit also garnered rave reviews from newspapers, magazines, and other media outlets across the United States. *School Library Journal* called it a "well-written and compelling . . . story of a huge talent that almost went unrecognized until the right people came along. . . . Hillenbrand does a wonderful job in bringing an unlikely winner to life." *Booklist* added that "Hillenbrand's detailed and dramatic re-creation of Seabiscuit's life and times is a remarkable testament to what four years of meticulous research and a writer's gift for storytelling can accomplish. And it's mighty good reading, even if you're not a racing fan." And a reviewer in *USA Today* declared that "[Hillenbrand] makes the reader understand why Americans, crushed by the Depression, found so much hope, inspiration, and pleasure in the story of a small horse who rose from obscurity to become a champion."

As the weeks passed by, even magazines that normally did not devote much attention to books chimed in with praise for Hillenbrand's account. *Sports Illustrated* observed that "it's a terrific story, but it's more than just a horse's tale, because the humans who owned, trained, and rode Seabiscuit are equally fascinating. . . . Hillenbrand's account of Seabiscuit's famous match race with War Admiral is alone worth the book's price." *Business Week*, meanwhile, described Hillenbrand as a "a deft storyteller whose descriptions of [big] races are especially good, filled with images of pounding hooves and splattering mud. But *Seabiscuit* is more than a horse story. It is an account of the flowering of mass-spectator sport in an age when the

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*"Random House editor
Jon Karp once said that
Seabiscuit is a metaphor
for my life, and he's right.
The subjects that I've written
about—the men and the
horse—were radically
different individuals,
but the one thread that pulls
through all of their lives
and through the events that
they live through together
is the struggle between
overwhelming hardship and
the will to overcome it."*

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public was starved for distraction. It also is an absorbing tale of the three quirky humans who brought out the best in *Seabiscuit*."

By year's end, *Seabiscuit* received numerous awards, including the William Hill Sports Book of the Year. It also was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. In addition, Hillenbrand and her book were featured

on ESPN, National Public Radio, NBC News, PBS, and in dozens of major magazines, newspapers, and Internet sites.

Throughout this time, Hillenbrand seized on the media publicity to educate the public about the nature of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. "As I lay in bed over the years, I wished that somebody prominent would go out and make an articulate case for CFS patients," she said. "So when *Seabiscuit*'s success gave me the opportunity to take on that role, I thought, OK, that's what I'm going to try to do."

In virtually every interview she gave, Hillenbrand explained the nature of CFS and urged people to recognize it as a serious health issue. Her efforts were greatly appreciated by such people as Kim Kenney, head of the Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome Association of America. According to Kenney, Hillenbrand "told

her story so graciously and compellingly. Her triumph has not only inspired patients but has really made a difference in helping the public understand what people with this illness have to go through."

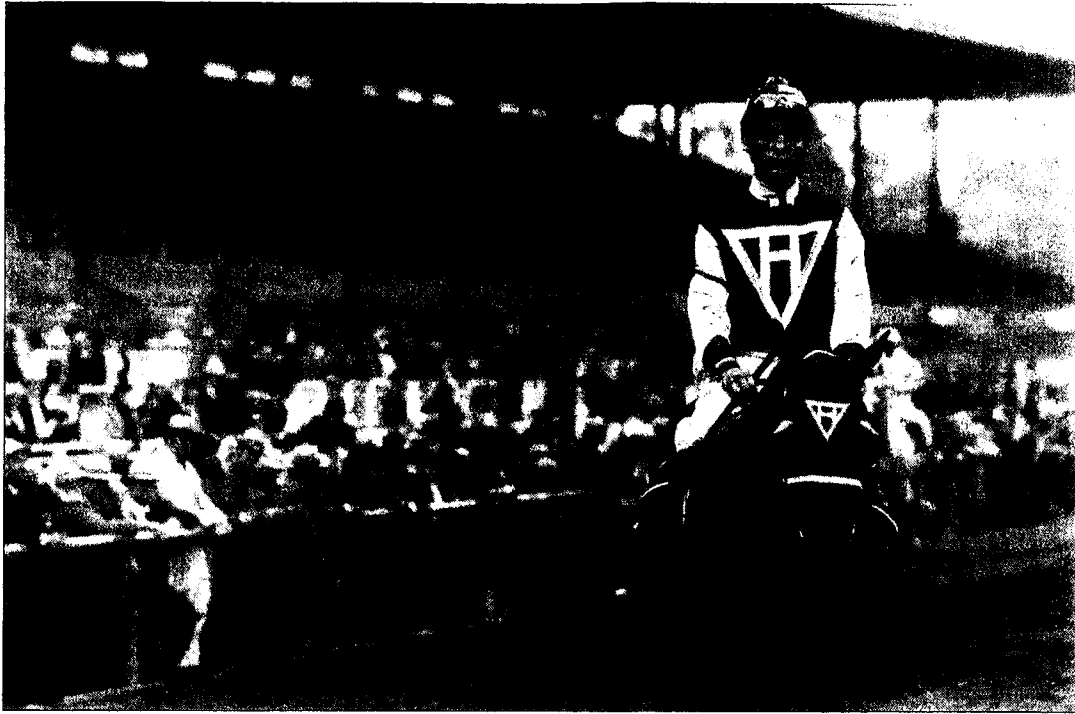
For her part, Hillenbrand believes that she was "exactly the right person" to tell the story of *Seabiscuit* and the men who guided her to success. "What my life has been like has helped me to understand these people and this story perhaps better than someone else might have," she said. "As soon as I began researching these people, I was positive that I wanted to get up every morning and have breakfast with them and live my life with them for a few years to come to understand them. I feel like they're people I could meet today and know intimately very quickly just because we have so much in common. . . . Random House editor Jon Karp once said that

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"Everything I do exhausts me, and I wake up every morning knowing that I'm going to take a lot of punishment that day, that I'm going to suffer a lot that day, and that's just what life is with this [disease].

The vertigo's very bad, I can barely read and write now, and that's part of having exhausted myself to finish this book. But it was worth it, I think."

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Tobey Maguire in a scene from the movie Seabiscuit.

Seabiscuit is a metaphor for my life, and he's right. The subjects that I've written about—the men and the horse—were radically different individuals, but the one thread that pulls through all of their lives and through the events that they live through together is the struggle between overwhelming hardship and the will to overcome it."

The Seabiscuit Phenomenon

In 2002 Hillenbrand's life continued to revolve around the Seabiscuit story. "Because of the attention the book is getting, I'm still living and breathing Seabiscuit," she noted. "In some ways, I guess I am the keeper of the Seabiscuit flame, but I've never felt that this story belonged to me. I was just the messenger."

In 2002 the PBS program "American Experience" broadcast a one-hour documentary on Seabiscuit that featured newsreel footage of his great races as well as extensive interviews with Hillenbrand. The show was warmly received by both audiences and critics. As the *Boston Globe* stated, "Seabiscuit is simply one hell of a story at any length. . . . It's almost impossible to screw up, and 'American Experience' doesn't. . . . The program is superior television." Hillenbrand also worked as a consultant on the feature film *Seabiscuit*, which was released in July 2003. The movie stars Tobey Maguire as Pollard, Chris Cooper as Tom Smith, and Jeff Bridges as Charles

——— “ ———

“Illnesses like this consume more than just your body; they become your identity. I had not been sick long before I felt I had lost myself in it, so that all I was to myself, and to everyone else, was a sick person. Writing gives me a means by which to redefine myself. It enables me to accomplish something that has nothing whatsoever to do with sickness, so it gives me a sense of dignity. I can be Laura the writer instead of Laura the invalid. Every word I write is a little victory against CFS.”

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Howard. Other Seabiscuit projects in which Hillenbrand has been involved include a heavily illustrated version of her book, which was released in the spring of 2003, and a version for children that will feature drawings by a top illustrator.

Hillenbrand admits that the publicity surrounding *Seabiscuit* took a toll on her health. “Everything I do exhausts me, and I wake up every morning knowing that I’m going to take a lot of punishment that day, that I’m going to suffer a lot that day, and that’s just what life is with this [disease]. The vertigo’s very bad, I can barely read and write now, and that’s part of having exhausted myself to finish this book. But it was worth it, I think.” In fact, she recognizes that she is not yet ready to take on another book project. “The process of writing *Seabiscuit* was an immensely demanding one; I gave everything I had to it, and collapsed afterward. I have to be physically ready to do that again before I write another book.”

Still, Hillenbrand assures her many fans that she has no intention of retiring. “Illnesses like this consume more than just your body; they become your identity,” she stated. “I had not been sick long before I felt I had lost myself in it, so that all I was to myself, and to everyone else, was a sick person. Writing gives me a means by which to redefine myself. It enables me to accomplish something that has nothing whatsoever to do with sickness, so it gives me a sense of dignity. I can be Laura the writer instead of Laura the invalid. Every word I write is a little victory against CFS.”

HOME AND FAMILY

Hillenbrand lives in Washington, D.C., with her longtime boyfriend Borden Flanagan, who is a professor of political philosophy at American University.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Hillenbrand is a Civil War buff, and she enjoys reading all sorts of literature. She is particularly fond of older books. "I have a sense of guilt when I read something new that I'm missing something old that I really ought to pay attention to, because I think the best writing, with some very notable exceptions, was in the past, that the best writers have come and gone already, but their works remain and we should read them," she explained.

WRITING CREDITS

Seabiscuit: An American Legend, 2001

Hillenbrand has also written numerous articles on horse racing for *Equus* and other magazines.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Eclipse Award for Magazine Writing: 1998, for "Four Good Legs Between Us"

Booksense Nonfiction Book of the Year: 2001, for *Seabiscuit*

William Hill Sports Book of the Year: 2001, for *Seabiscuit*

Big Sport of Turfdom Award (Turf Publicists of America): 2002, for *Seabiscuit*

FURTHER READING

Books

Seabiscuit: An American Legend, 2001

Periodicals

Booklist, Jan. 15, 2001, p.900; Sep. 1, 2001, p.35;

Boston Globe, Oct. 24, 2002, p.D1; Apr. 19, 2003, p.D1

Business Week, Mar. 26, 2001, p.27

Entertainment Weekly, Dec. 21, 2001, p.58

Kansas City (MO.) Star, Apr. 20, 2002, p.F1

Kenyon College Alumni Bulletin, Spring 2001

Ladies' Home Journal, Nov. 2001, p.100

Library Journal, Apr. 1, 2001, p.106

New York Times, July 16, 2002, p.G7; Apr. 18, 2003, p.S6

New Yorker, July 7, 2003, p.56

People, Aug. 11, 2003, p.71

Publishers Weekly, Jan. 1, 2001, p.75
School Library Journal, Nov. 1, 2001
Smithsonian, Dec. 2002, p.58
Sports Illustrated, Mar. 5, 2001, p.445; May 14, 2001, p.30
US Weekly, Apr. 2, 2001, p.74; May 7, 2001, p.48
USA Today, July 23, 2001, p.D4; May 23, 2002, p.D1
Washington Post, Feb. 28, 2001, p.D6; Mar. 1, 2001, p.D7; Mar. 9, 2001, p.C1;
Apr. 20, 2003, p.Y7; Apr. 21, 2003, p.C1; June 22, 2003, p.E3

Information for this biographical profile was also gathered from National Public Radio's April 7, 2001, and June 1, 2003, broadcasts of "Weekend Edition," and from the "Seabiscuit" episode of the "American Experience" PBS series.

Online Articles

<http://www.cnn.com> (CNN.com, "Author Escapes Illness with Stirring 'Seabiscuit,'" May 4, 2001)
<http://www.equierey.com> (*Equierey*, "The Equierey Interview: Author Laura Hillenbrand and Seabiscuit," Sep. 2001)
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour>
(*Online NewsHour*, "Conversation: Seabiscuit," May 4, 2001)
<http://www.webdelsol>
(*SolPix*, "An Interview with Laura Hillenbrand," 2002)

Online Databases

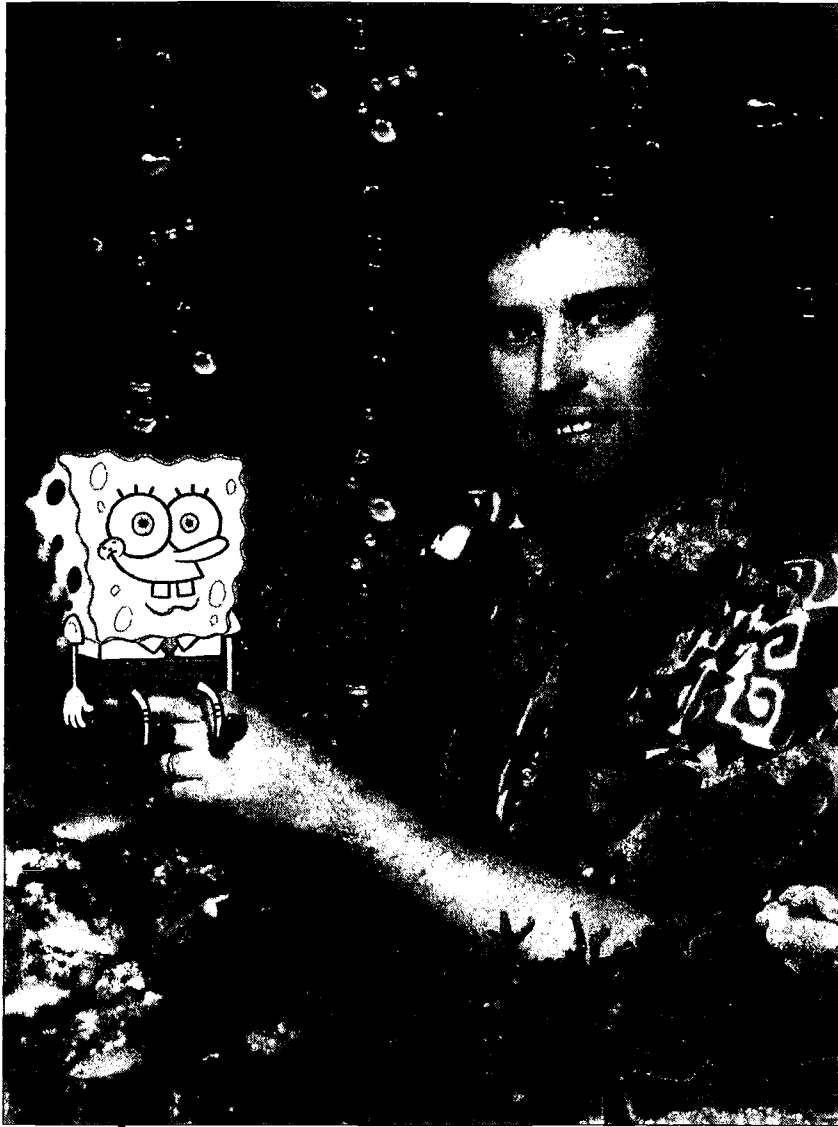
Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, article from *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2003

ADDRESS

Laura Hillenbrand
Random House
1745 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/seabiscuit>
<http://www.seabiscuitonline.com>



Stephen Hillenburg 1961-

American Animator, Writer, and Marine Biologist
Creator, Executive Producer, and Head Writer of the
Nickelodeon Animated Television Series "SpongeBob
SquarePants"

BIRTH

Stephen Hillenburg was born on August 21, 1961, in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. His father worked as a draftsman and designer for aerospace companies, and his mother taught visually handicapped students. He has one younger brother.

YOUTH

The Hillenburg family moved to Orange County, California, in the mid-1960s. Little information is available about Stephen's childhood. When an interviewer asked him to describe himself as a child, for example, he replied that he was "probably well-meaning and naive like all kids." He has also said that he loved drawing and going to the beach as a boy. When Hillenburg was 15 years old, he learned to snorkel at Woods Cove in Laguna Beach. This experience gave him a profound and lasting interest in the ocean and the creatures of the sea.

EDUCATION

Hillenburg graduated from Savanna High School in Anaheim, California, and then went on to attend Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. He earned a bachelor's degree in natural resources, with an emphasis on marine resources, in 1984. After working in the field of marine biology for three years, Hillenburg decided to continue his education at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia. He earned a master's degree in experimental animation in 1992.

CHOOSING A CAREER

From the time his family moved to California, Hillenburg was fascinated by the ocean. His interest in marine life led him to study marine resources in college. Upon graduating from Humboldt State University in 1984, Hillenburg got a job at the Orange County Marine Institute. His work involved preparing exhibits and teaching children about life undersea and in tide pools. Tide pools are small, enclosed ponds that are created when seawater collects on a reef, rocky shore, or beach as the tide recedes. A wide variety of creatures live in tide pools, including sponges, octopi, crabs, and starfish. "We taught tide-pool ecology, nautical history, diversity, and adaptation," he recalled. "Working as a marine science educator, I had the chance to see how enamored [fascinated] kids are with undersea life, especially tide pool creatures."

Although Hillenburg enjoyed marine biology, he longed to find a way to express his creative side in his work. "I've always been interested in art and making things, but I chose not to go to art school because I thought I needed to do something else. Art was a tough way to make a living," he explained. "I've always done both. I just kind of figured that the marine biology would be a career and the art would be something I did for my own self-expression." Finally, after three years of teaching at the Orange

County Marine Institute, Hillenburg returned to school to pursue a graduate degree in animation. "Changing careers like that is scary," he admitted. "But the irony is that animation is a pretty healthy career right now and science education is more of a struggle."

During his years as a student at the California Institute of Arts, Hillenburg produced several short animated films. Two of these films, *The Green Beret* and *Wormholes*, have been exhibited in numerous international film festivals. In 1991 Hillenburg was one of six recipients of the annual Princess Grace Foundation-USA film grant award. This award was established to recognize and assist the career development of promising young artists in American theater, dance, and film. Hillenburg's success as a student filmmaker reassured him that pursuing a career in the arts was worthwhile.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Stephen Hillenburg is best known as the creator of "SpongeBob SquarePants," a highly popular animated children's series on the Nickelodeon cable television network. Hillenburg drew upon both his experience as a marine biologist and his training as a filmmaker to create the show. The title character is a nerdy but likeable yellow sea sponge who lives and works in an underwater city in the Pacific Ocean. "SpongeBob SquarePants" was an immediate hit when it made its debut in 1999. It went on to become the top-rated animated show for children, and it also attracted millions of adult fans.

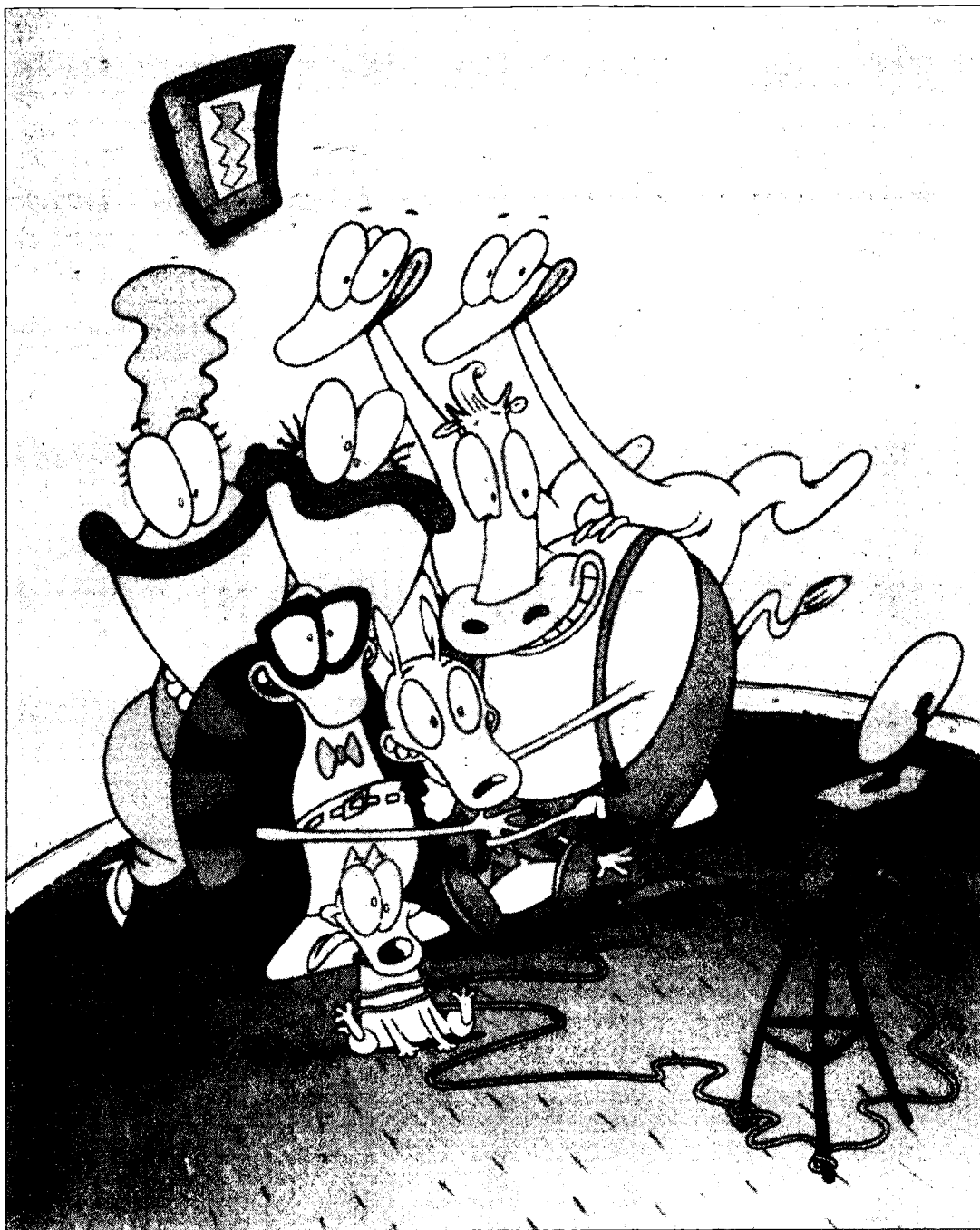
"Rocko's Modern Life"

After Hillenburg graduated from the California Institute of Arts, he got a job with Nickelodeon. Nick is America's top children's cable television channel, with a viewership of more than 78 million households in the United States. He started as a writer on "Rocko's Modern Life," an animated children's show that first aired on Nick in September 1993.

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"I've always been interested in art and making things, but I chose not to go to art school because I thought I needed to do something else. Art was a tough way to make a living. I've always done both [art and science]. I just kind of figured that the marine biology would be a career and the art would be something I did for my own self-expression."

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"Rocko's Modern Life"

The program centered around an Australian wallaby named Rocko, who was living on his own for the first time. He lived with his not-so-brilliant dog, Spunky, in O-Town, USA. His best friend was a bumbling steer named Heffer. Rocko also had a number of eccentric neighbors, including an uptight toad couple, a timid turtle, and a sneaky slug. Although "Rocko's Modern Life" was promoted as a children's cartoon, it featured some adult themes.

During his first three years at Nick, Hillenburg worked closely with Joe Murray, the creator and producer of "Rocko's Modern Life." During the show's final year, Hillenburg was promoted to creative director of the show. In this position, he participated in and helped oversee most aspects of the production cycle. Still, his experience with "Rocko's Modern Life" made him reluctant to try to produce his own series. "After watching Joe tear his hair out a lot, dealing with all the problems that came up," Hillenburg said, "I thought I would never want to produce a show of my own."

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Creating a New Series

But in 1996, as "Rocko's Modern Life" was coming to an end, Hillenburg ignored his reservations and began to think about creating his own animated show for children. He claims that the idea for "SpongeBob SquarePants" came to him one day as he was driving to the beach on the Santa Monica Freeway.

As Hillenburg developed the show's concept, he knew that he wanted to create "something that was fantastic but believable." He thought about his teaching experience at the Orange County Marine Institute and remembered how so many children had been fascinated by marine life. He decided to create a series that takes place un-

derwater, with a focus on creatures that can be found in tide pools. "I wanted to create a small town underwater where the characters were more like us than like fish," he explained. "They have fire. They take walks. They drive. They have pets and holidays."

Hillenburg knew that he wanted his main character to be a sponge. Yet when he began to draw cartoon characters that resembled real sea sponges, they never had the right appeal. Real sea sponges are living creatures that don't look like the geometrically shaped cellulose sponges many people use in their kitchens. "At first I drew a few natural sponges — amorphous shapes, blobs — which was the correct thing to do biologically as a marine science teacher," he recalled. "Then I drew a square sponge, and it looked so funny. I think as far as cartoon language goes he was easier to recog-

For "SpongeBob," Hillenburg decided to create a series that takes place underwater, with a focus on creatures that can be found in tide pools. "I wanted to create a small town underwater where the characters were more like us than like fish. They have fire. They take walks. They drive. They have pets and holidays."

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nize. He seemed to fit the character type I was looking for—a somewhat nerdy, squeaky clean oddball.” As a result, the character of SpongeBob looks more like a kitchen sponge than like an underwater sea sponge.

SpongeBob SquarePants

The first name Hillenburg came up with for his main character was Sponge-Boy, but he soon found out that the name was already trademarked. After

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“At first I drew a few natural sponges — amorphous shapes, blobs — which was the correct thing to do biologically as a marine science teacher. Then I drew a square sponge, and it looked so funny. I think as far as cartoon language goes he was easier to recognize. He seemed to fit the character type I was looking for — a somewhat nerdy, squeaky clean oddball.”

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some thought, Hillenburg renamed him SpongeBob and also gave him a last name — SquarePants. This unusual name became the title of the show.

As a marine biologist, Hillenburg knew that he could not base a cartoon around a character that really acted like a sponge. “Sponges are a colonial animal,” Hillenburg explained, “which basically means they’re a bunch of cells that work together in order to survive. They have no nervous system. The behavior is, they sit and siphon water.” SpongeBob, on the other hand, does far more than just sit around. He is a square, yellow sea sponge who wears a necktie, shorts, and shoes. He lives in a two-story pineapple and works in the underwater city of Bikini Bottom, off the Pacific Coast.

Hillenburg created a number of humorous characters for the show, in addition to SpongeBob — whose voice was supplied by Tom Kenny, the voice

of Rocko on “Rocko’s Modern Life.” Most of these supporting characters were also based on creatures found in the ocean. For example, SpongeBob has a pet snail, Gary, who meows like a cat. His best friend is Patrick Starfish, a surfer-dude type whose hobbies include sleeping and lying dormant. SpongeBob’s next-door neighbor is Squidward Tentacles, a grumpy octopus who plays the clarinet. Another of SpongeBob’s good friends is Sandy Cheeks, a squirrel from Texas who lives in an oxygen-filled air dome.

SpongeBob and Squidward work as fry cooks at the Krusty Krab, a fast-food restaurant in Bikini Bottom. SpongeBob considers this his dream job



"SpongeBob SquarePants"

and claims that he and Squidward are the dream team when it comes to flipping burgers. But the owner of the restaurant, Mr. Krabs, is only interested in making money. He is worried that his archrival, Plankton, is trying to steal his secret Krab Patty recipe. Mr. Krabs has a teenage daughter named Pearl, who is a whale.

SpongeBob is very optimistic, always looking on the bright side of life. He always manages to get into trouble, but he never lets it get him down. His

happy-go-lucky attitude often annoys Squidward and Mr. Krabs, but they both tolerate him because he is so likeable. “The main thing about SpongeBob is that he celebrates innocence,” Hillenburg said of his main character. “His outlook on life is very optimistic and earnest, and I think kids relate to that. He has a creative spark, in the same way children are very creative from an open and naive perspective.” Hillenburg noted that

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“The main thing about SpongeBob is that he celebrates innocence. His outlook on life is very optimistic and earnest, and I think kids relate to that. He has a creative spark, in the same way children are very creative from an open and naive perspective.”

Hillenburg noted that the premise of the show “is that innocence prevails — which I don’t think it always does in real life.”

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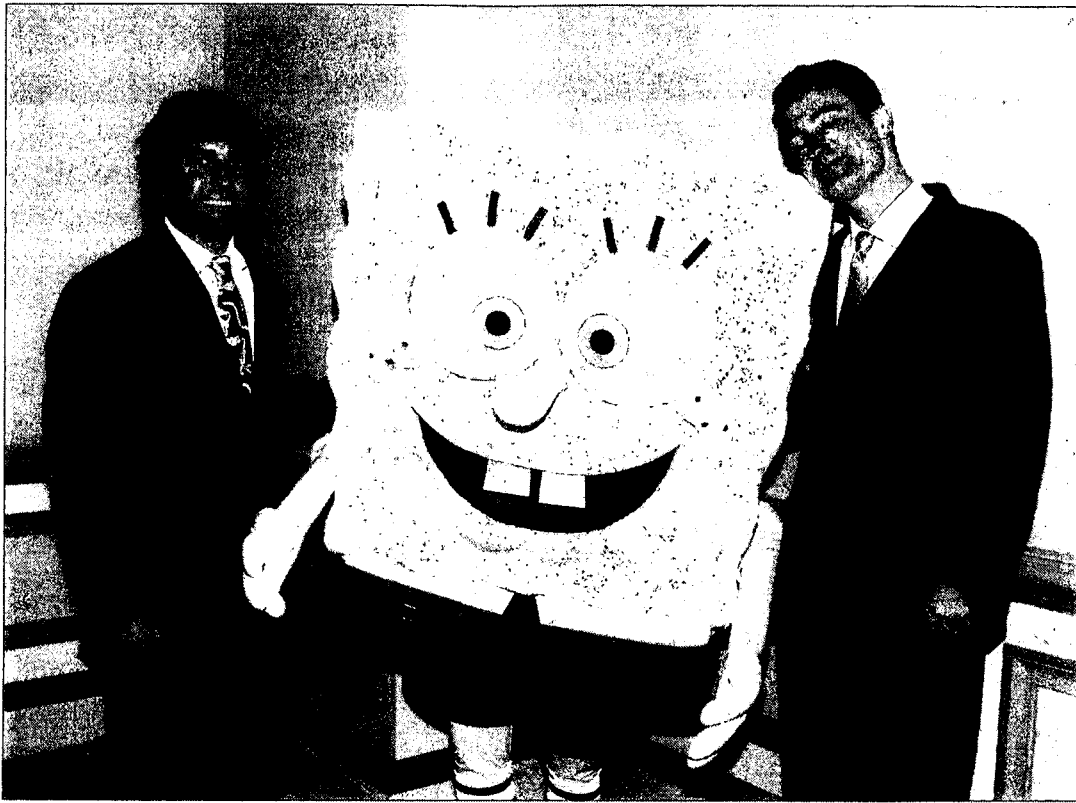
the premise of the show “is that innocence prevails — which I don’t think it always does in real life.”

“SpongeBob SquarePants” Becomes a Huge Hit

Hillenburg kept thinking about SpongeBob and his friends until he had created what he called “a whole world in my head.” He turned this world into what is known in the field of animation as a “Bible” — a book full of characters, descriptions, settings, and situations — that forms the basis of a cartoon series. Then came the time for Hillenburg to present his idea to decision-makers at Nickelodeon. He made a colorful presentation that featured an aquarium full of unusual sea creatures, three-dimensional versions of the main characters sculpted in clay, and a ukelele that he used to play his original theme song. Nickelodeon liked the idea and asked Hillenburg to come up with a story for a pilot episode. Hillenburg wrote a story and illustrat-

ed it with a series of rough drawings to create a storyboard. Nickelodeon approved the storyboard and gave him money to produce the show.

The “SpongeBob SquarePants” cartoon premiered on Nickelodeon in July 1999, with Hillenburg becoming the show’s head writer and executive producer. It was an immediate hit, quickly emerging as the number one animated show among children between the ages of two and 11. To the surprise of many experts, however, the show also gained a large following among older audiences. “SpongeBob” was especially popular with college students. In addition, many parents began watching the show on their own after being exposed to it through their children. “It seems like we’re

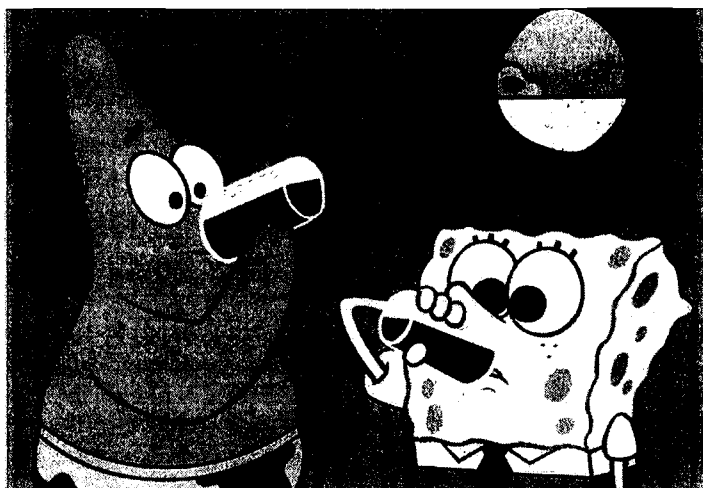


Stephen Hillenburg (left) poses with Tom Kenny (right), the voice of SpongeBob.

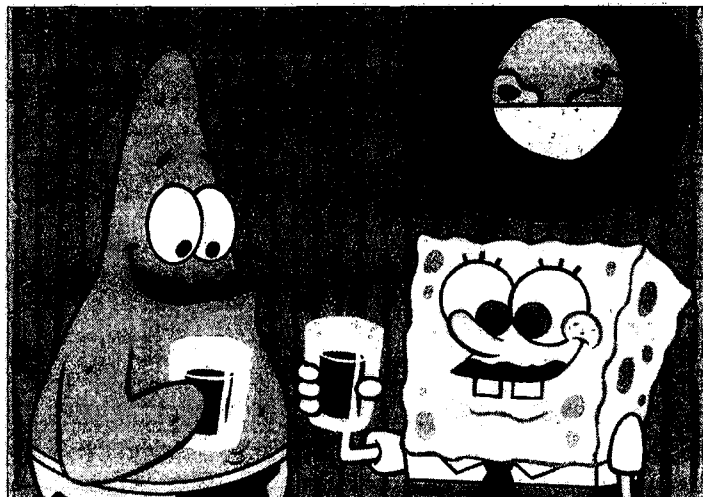
aiming at a child audience, but everyone can laugh at the basic human traits that are funny. It's playful, the humor is playful, the world is playful," Hillenburg explained. "Our characters act silly, even totally ridiculous at times. And most of our jokes don't come out of pop cultural references."

Some observers attribute the show's broad appeal to its positive message and values. In fact, the Parents Television Council ranked it third-best among prime-time shows for portraying strong family values. Fans note that "SpongeBob SquarePants" is simple and funny, without the vulgarity and violence seen in many contemporary cartoons. The main message of the show is the importance of treating other people with respect. "We don't concentrate on morality during the show, but [viewers] know when something is wrong," Hillenburg stated. "When [SpongeBob] lies, he gets it. He is a creative, open-minded being, and kids should feel free to be creative and know it is OK to be a nerd." At the same time, though, Hillenburg insists that the intent of "SpongeBob" is to make people laugh at human nature rather than to educate them.

"SpongeBob SquarePants" has received positive reviews from television critics. For example, Verne Gay of *Newsday* called it "quite possibly the most brilliantly imaginative animated show on TV this season." Writing in the



Milk
mustaches
don't
last long
when you're
a sponge.

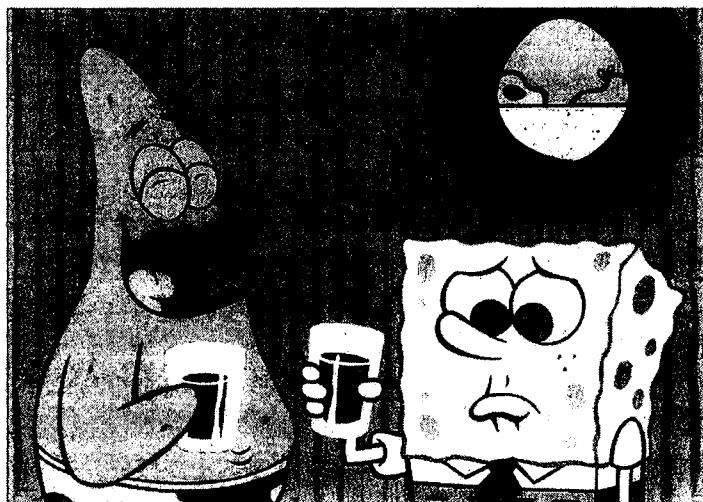


Which means
I may have
to drink
another glass
of yummy
chocolate
milk.

Or two.

Or three.

Or four.



CHOCOLATE
got milk?

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LOGOS AND SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS CREATED BY STEPHEN HILLENBURG.
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SpongeBob SquarePants "soaks up" chocolate milk in a new ad for got milk?

New York Post, Michael Glitz praised "SpongeBob" as a "sweet, good-natured show with a hero who is decidedly square (in every sense of the word). . . . In an age where even kiddie shows are expected to be edgy,

'SpongeBob' is clever but noticeably free of double entendre, adult asides, and irony."

In March 2001, Nick aired a special prime-time episode of "SpongeBob SquarePants" that gave kids the opportunity to choose the ending. It was a suspenseful half-hour special entitled "You Wish." Kids were able to vote online or call in to choose which of three characters (SpongeBob, Patrick, or Squidward) would have their wish granted. The vote determined the official ending of the episode. Patchy, a pirate who is president of the SpongeBob fan club, appeared at the beginning and end of the special to help guide kids through the online and call-in voting process.

By May 2001, the popularity of "SpongeBob SquarePants" had begun to spread around the world. It became a top-ten show for Nick in Australia, Mexico, Argentina, and the United Kingdom. In June 2001, polls showed that over one-third of the audience for "SpongeBob" was over 18. The following month, Nick responded to the large number of adult viewers by adding "SpongeBob SquarePants" to its prime-time schedule. The show was broadcast four nights per week (Monday through Thursday) at 8:00 p.m. This programming change dramatically increased the number of older viewers. By May 2002, the show's total viewership reached more than 61 million. Children and teens continued to account for the majority of viewers, but the show also reached an estimated 20 million people between the ages of 18 and 49.

"SpongeBob" counts a number of celebrities among its fans. In addition, the show is popular among gay men. Although Hillenburg said that he did not intend to portray any of the characters on "SpongeBob" as homosexuals, he understands why gay people can relate to the show. "I do think that the attitude of the show is about tolerance," he acknowledged. "Everybody is different, and the show embraces that. The character SpongeBob is an oddball. He's kind of weird, but he's kind of special. Although SpongeBob and his pals are all very different from one another, they get along. No one is shut out. I always think of them as being somewhat asexual."

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"We don't concentrate on morality during the show, but [viewers] know when something is wrong. When [SpongeBob] lies, he gets it. He is a creative, open-minded being, and kids should feel free to be creative and know it is OK to be a nerd."

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SpongeBob Expands into Movies and Merchandise

During an average day in the production of the TV show, Hillenburg worked from about 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and then returned to his home in Hollywood. He typically supervised preliminary drawings, scripts, soundtracks, editing, color, and other details. According to Hillenburg, "SpongeBob" was put together differently than most other animated children's shows. First, a creative team came up with the premise for each episode. Then a second team fleshed out the idea as a storyboard. This means that

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"I never imagined that it would get to this point. When you set out to do a show about a sponge, you can't anticipate this kind of craze. We just try to make ourselves laugh, then ask if it's appropriate for children. I can tell you that we hoped it would be liked by adults. But we really thought the best we could hope for was a college audience."

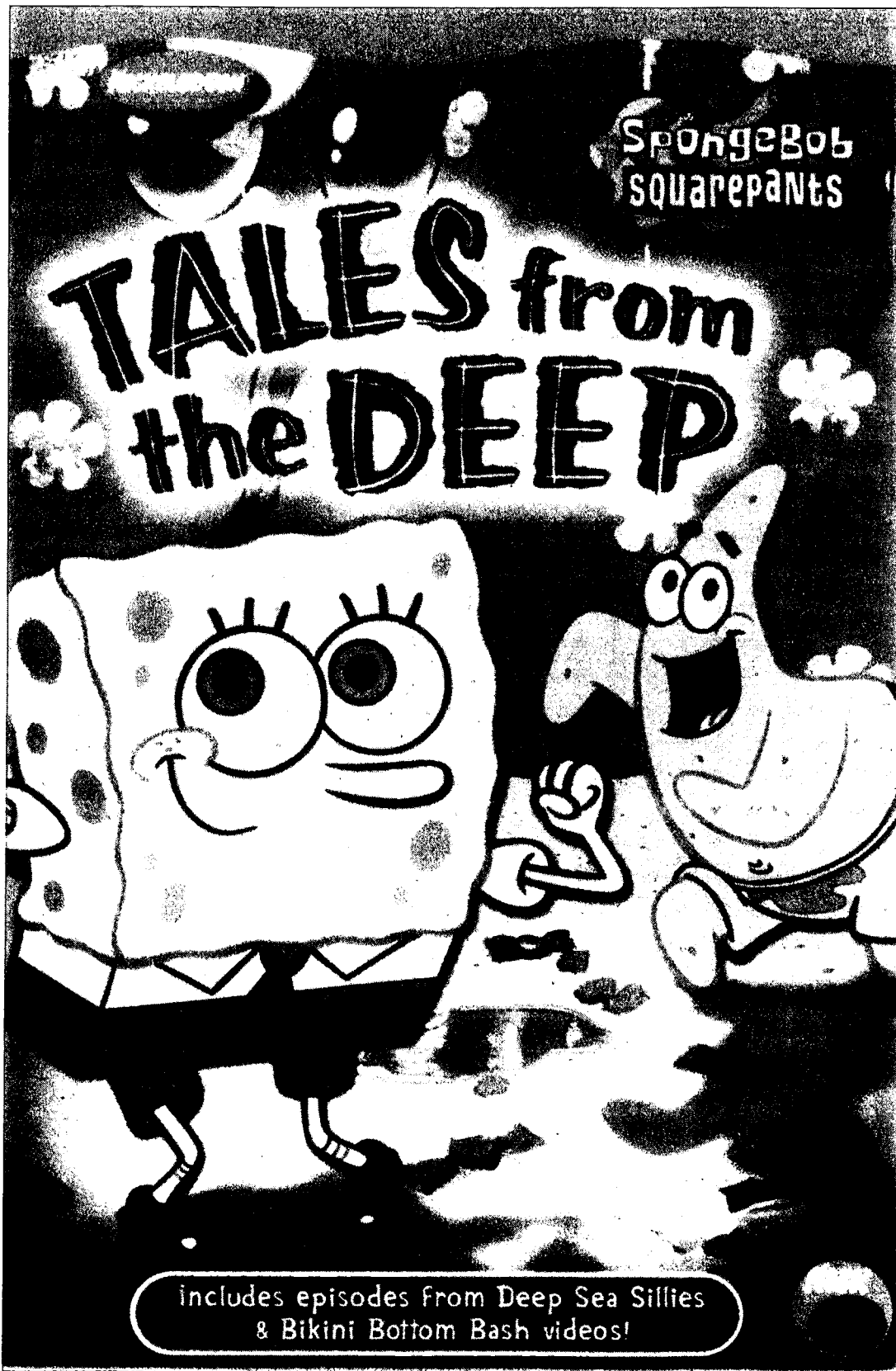
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they drew the action frames and came up with the dialogue on a board that looks "kind of like a comic book." The finished storyboards were sent to Rough Draft Studios in Korea, where the animation was done. Then the film came back to Burbank, California, where the sound, music, and editing were completed. From start to finish, each episode took between nine and twelve months to make.

As the popularity of the "SpongeBob SquarePants" cartoon grew, so did the popularity of SpongeBob merchandise. In 2002, for example, enthusiastic fans spent over \$750 million on items bearing the SpongeBob name. SpongeBob merchandise ranges from children's toys, games, and clothing to adult items like air fresheners, fishing poles, mud flaps, and yoga mats. The SpongeBob craze even extended

into such food items as macaroni and cheese, ice cream bars, and cereal. Fans of SpongeBob have also created hundreds of sites on the Internet dedicated to the show, including guides to episodes of "SpongeBob SquarePants" and online polls that track favorite characters.

Hillenburg is surprised by the popularity of the show, and particularly by its strong appeal to adult audiences. "I never imagined that it would get to this point. When you set out to do a show about a sponge, you can't anticipate this kind of craze. We just try to make ourselves laugh, then ask if it's appropriate for children," he noted. "I can tell you that we hoped it would be liked by adults. But we really thought the best we could hope for was a college audience."



The DVD cover of Tales from the Deep.

In April 2002, Hillenburg decided to end his work on the "SpongeBob SquarePants" television series. By this time he had produced 60 episodes. A few months later, Hillenburg began working on a feature-length "SpongeBob SquarePants" film that is scheduled to be released in late 2004. "I don't want to try and do a movie and the series at the same time," he explained. "We have 60 episodes and that is probably as many as Nick really needs. It is a standard number for a show like this. I have done a little research and people say it is just crazy doing a series and movie at the same time. I would rather concentrate on doing a good job on the movie."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Hillenburg and his wife, Karen, have a son named Clay. They live in Hollywood, California. Karen is a chef who teaches at the New School of Cooking in Culver City. Hillenburg considers his wife to be the funniest person he knows.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

In his spare time, Hillenburg enjoys surfing, snorkeling, scuba diving, and playing "noisy rock music" on his guitar.

SELECTED CREDITS

Independent Animated Short Films

The Green Beret, 1992

Wormholes, 1992

Television Series

"Rocko's Modern Life," 1994-1996 (creative director)

"SpongeBob SquarePants," 1996-2002 (creator, executive producer, and writer)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Film Grant Award (Princess Grace Foundation-USA): 1991

Los Angeles International Animation Competition Winner: 1992, for *The Green Beret*

Golden Reel Award (Motion Picture Sound Editors): 2000, for "SpongeBob SquarePants," for best sound editing in television animation

Television Critics Association Award: 2002, for "SpongeBob SquarePants," for top children's show

Walk the Talk Award (Heal the Bay environmental public interest group):
 2001, for elevating marine life awareness through the "SpongeBob
 SquarePants" cartoon
 Princess Grace Statue Award (Princess Grace Foundation — USA): 2002
 50 Greatest Cartoon Characters of All Time (*TV Guide*): 2002, for
 "SpongeBob SquarePants" (number 9)
 Reuben Awards (National Cartoonists Society): 2003

FURTHER READING

Periodicals

Boston Globe, July 7, 2002, p.L1
Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, Mar. 16, 2003, p.H1
Current Biography Yearbook, 2003
Current Science, Aug. 30, 2002, p.8
Houston Chronicle, July 16, 1999, p.1
Los Angeles Times, Apr. 7, 2002, part 5, p.1
New York Times, July 11, 1999, p.37; July 29, 2001, p.13; July 21, 2002, p.5
Orlando Sentinel, May 18, 2001, p.E1
Philadelphia Inquirer, Mar. 19, 2003, p.E1
Salt Lake Tribune, May 11, 2001, p.B1
San Francisco Chronicle, Mar. 9, 2003, p.37; May 27, 2003, p.D1
San Jose Mercury News, July 11, 1999, p.4
Washington Post, Oct. 15, 2001, p.C14

Online Articles

<http://www.ocmetro.com>
 (OC Metro, "Young, Smart, and On Top," May 2, 2002)

ADDRESS

Stephen Hillenburg
 Nickelodeon
 231 West Olive Avenue
 Burbank, CA 91502

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

http://www.nick.com/all_nick/tv_supersites/spongebob
<http://www.pgfusa.com/alumni/bios/hillenburg.html>



Norton Juster 1929-

American Writer, Architect, and Professor of Design
Author of the Children's Classic *The Phantom Tollbooth*

BIRTH

Norton Juster was born on June 2, 1929, in Brooklyn, a section of New York City. His father, Samuel H. Juster, was an architect, and his mother, Minnie (Silberman) Juster, was a homemaker.

YOUTH

Juster enjoyed reading throughout his childhood. His favorite books included *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Wind in the Willows*, but he read everything from boys' boarding school stories to reference books. "I used to read the encyclopedia when I was a kid," he noted. "We had a big set of them at home and I just read it for fun. And I had this most fantastic assortment of totally unrelated and irrelevant facts at my fingertips which I used to terrorize teachers."

Juster was fascinated by language and always liked authors who used words in interesting ways. He inherited his love of language from his father, who drove the family crazy with his puns, riddles, and wordplay. "My father was the kind of person who would greet you by saying, 'I see you're coming early lately. You used to be behind but now you're first at last,'" Juster recalled.

As he grew older, Juster discovered that he enjoyed playing with words on his own. "I used to like to write and mess around when I was in elementary school and high school, but I never took it too seriously," he remembered. "I used to invent little stories, turn things upside-down, and play with ideas. How does a sound look? What color is the number three?"

“

"I used to read the encyclopedia when I was a kid. We had a big set of them at home and I just read it for fun. And I had this most fantastic assortment of totally unrelated and irrelevant facts at my fingertips which I used to terrorize teachers."

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EDUCATION

Juster attended Public School 99 and James Madison High School in Brooklyn. Upon graduation, he went to the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) to study architecture. Juster claimed that he always knew that he wanted to become an architect like his father. "When I went to school I couldn't conceive of anything else I wanted to do," he admitted. "From day one, my toys would be the samples my father brought home from the office: wood samples, stone samples. That's what I messed around with. I loved the idea of making things."

Juster earned a bachelor's degree in architecture from Penn in 1952. He spent the next year doing graduate work in city planning at the University of Liverpool in England on a Fulbright Fellowship.

MILITARY SERVICE

Upon completing his education, Juster enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserves. He served on active duty from 1954 to 1957 with the Civil Engineer Corps. Part of his military service involved helping to build air fields in Morocco in Africa and Newfoundland in Canada. He found his time in Newfoundland to be so boring that he wrote stories to amuse himself. "There was nothing to do," he remembered. "You could go crazy, so I started writing and illustrating, doing watercolors and hanging them up."

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Juster always knew that he wanted to become an architect like his father.

"When I went to school I couldn't conceive of anything else I wanted to do. From day one, my toys would be the samples my father brought home from the office: wood samples, stone samples. That's what I messed around with. I loved the idea of making things."

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Norton Juster worked as an architect and taught college-level courses in architectural design for more than 30 years. He also continued writing stories as a form of relaxation, publishing several books for children and adults over the years. Juster is best known for his first book, *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Widely considered to be a modern classic of children's literature, it has remained in print for more than 40 years. Children and adults alike appreciate the book's exciting plot, clever wordplay, and important message about the pursuit of knowledge.

Becoming a Writer

After completing his military service, Juster began practicing as an architect in New York City. In 1960 he became a partner in the architecture firm Juster and Gugliotta and also took a position as a professor of design at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. "My sense of myself is as an architect, and I am always a little embarrassed to call myself a writer since I don't engage in it with the same consistency and commitment," he once explained. "The way I see things and think about things is as an architect, and my writing is totally influenced by this."

Juster launched his writing career around the same time as his architecture career. "I received a grant from the Ford Foundation to write a book for kids about urban perception, or how people experience cities, but I kept putting off writing it," he recalled. "Instead I started to write what became

The Phantom Tollbooth. It was like goofing off, writing this. It was fun. I did a lot of research for the other book, but whenever I sat down to write I kept going back to the fictional story." The story gradually came together into a book, which was published by Random House in 1961. "I didn't know it was going to be a book," Juster noted. "I thought it was just a little episode or a story. When it got going it began to sort of piece itself together. The whole thing happened in a very strange way. I would not recommend it as a way to write a book for anybody."

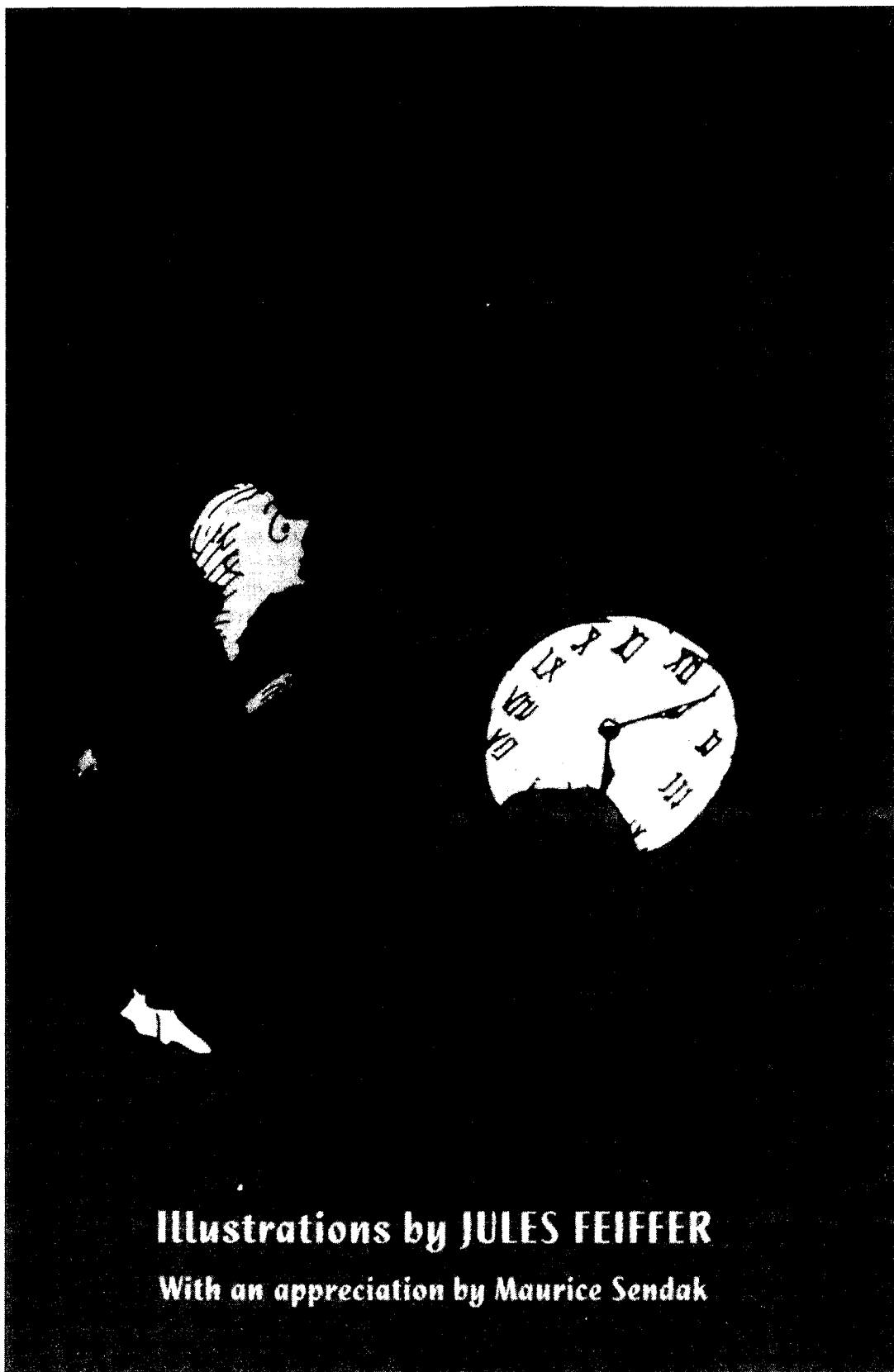
The Phantom Tollbooth

The Phantom Tollbooth is a humorous fantasy-adventure story about a boy named Milo who is bored with his life, both at home and at school. Juster drew from recollections of his own childhood in creating the main character. "I am the original Milo," he admitted. "When I wrote [the book], it was very personal to me and it really dealt with a lot of the things that I recall—not so much events as feelings—when I was a kid. Having to learn things that I didn't want to learn. Finding myself with a large piece of time that I didn't know what to do with—in other words, being bored."

In *The Phantom Tollbooth*, Milo arrives home from school one day to find a mysterious package waiting for him. The outside of the box says, "Easily assembled at home, and for use by those who have never traveled in Lands Beyond." Milo opens the box to find the pieces of a magical purple tollbooth, along with instructions and a map. Since he has nothing better to do, Milo assembles the tollbooth. When he drives through it in his toy car, he is instantly transported to the Kingdom of Wisdom.

The kingdom consists of two parts. One part is Dictionopolis, the land of words, which is ruled by King Azaz the Unabridged. The other part is Digitopolis, the land of numbers, which is ruled by the Mathemagician. The two rulers are brothers who constantly argue over the relative value of words and numbers. The last thing they agreed upon was the decision to send their twin sisters Rhyme and Reason away to the Mountains of Ignorance. Milo sets off on a difficult and dangerous mission to rescue the sisters and thus bring meaning back to words and numbers.

Milo is accompanied on his journey by two companions, a ticking watchdog named Tock and a giant insect named Humbug. "I realized that I needed two companions," Juster noted. "Tock the Watch Dog was the friend that you always wanted because he was dependable. You could always count on him. He was the friend your mother wanted you to play with because he was straight and good. But that felt one-sided, and so I



Illustrations by JULES FEIFFER
With an appreciation by Maurice Sendak

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created Humbug, who was exactly the kind of untrustworthy character that gets a kid into trouble and who mothers can't stand."

As his quest continues, Milo passes through several strange lands and encounters many unusual characters. For example, he goes through the Doldrums and meets the Lethargians, a species that specializes in wasting time. Along the way, Milo collects tools of knowledge to use in his rescue mission. When he finally reaches the Mountains of Ignorance, Milo uses his wits to defeat a series of demons, including the Terrible Trivium, Gross Exaggeration, Threadbare Excuse, Everpresent Wordsnatcher, Overbearing Know-It-All, and Senses Taker. He rescues Rhyme and Reason and brings them back to the Kingdom of Wisdom, where he is welcomed as a hero.

When Milo returns home, he is surprised to find that only an hour has passed. Yet he recognizes that he has been forever changed by his adventure. After experiencing the excitement of learning and using his wits, he understands that the pursuit of knowledge will allow him to overcome the boredom in his life.

The Phantom Tollbooth was illustrated by Jules Feiffer, who went on to become a famous political cartoonist. Juster and Feiffer lived in the same apartment building in Brooklyn Heights in the mid-1950s. The two men became friends and later shared an apartment. Juster recalled that he never actually asked Feiffer to illustrate his book. Instead, the collaboration seemed to happen naturally. "He just started making drawings," the author remembered. "He was reading the stuff I wrote, and without telling me, really, he started to make a few drawings. I told him they were terrific. That's how it happened."

Over time, Juster and Feiffer entered into a good-natured contest that added to the humor of the book. "I started creating characters that Jules wouldn't know how to draw," Juster admitted. "That's how I came up with the Triple Demons of Compromise. In the book, I describe them: 'One tall

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"I am the original Milo. When I wrote [the book], it was very personal to me and it really dealt with a lot of the things that I recall — not so much events as feelings — when I was a kid. Having to learn things that I didn't want to learn. Finding myself with a large piece of time that I didn't know what to do with — in other words, being bored."

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© 1971 METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER Inc.

A movie still from The Phantom Tollbooth, 1971.

and thin, one short and fat, and the third exactly like the other two.' It struck me as funny to try to write things he would have difficulty drawing." Feiffer took his revenge by making one of the book's unsavory characters, the Whether Man, resemble Juster.

First Novel Becomes a Classic

When *The Phantom Tollbooth* was first published in 1961, Juster had no inkling of the book's future popularity and success. "I had the usual first book paranoia," he admitted. "I was convinced that the book was distributed in the dead of night, in unmarked trucks, in unidentified boxes that were immediately put in the basements of bookstores where they would never be seen again." Instead, the book received a glowing review in the *New Yorker* and took off from there.

In 1962 *The Phantom Tollbooth* was included on the *New York Times* list of best-selling children's books of the year. In 1966 it was included on the newspaper's list of the 50 best children's books published in the previous five years. The book went on to sell 1.4 million copies in the United States over the next 30 years. It was translated into more than a dozen languages

and adapted as a feature film and as an opera. In 1999 *The Phantom Tollbooth* was selected as one of the top 100 children's books by the National Education Association. It was even made into a feature-length animated film in 1971 by Chuck Jones, the legendary creator of Bugs Bunny and other cartoon characters. (For more information on Jones, see the entry in *Biography Today Authors*, Vol. 12.)

Readers and critics alike enjoyed the book's amusing wordplay, interesting characters, well-drawn fantasy world, and exciting adventure plot. "Part extended joke, part moral fable, part fairy story, there is little with which one can compare it," noted a writer for the *St. James Guide to Fantasy Writers*. "Juster's flair for combining wit and knowledge makes this charming story far more than a moralistic tale, exhorting people to read and learn. At the end, Milo's newfound enthusiasm for reading, and his realization that knowledge can provide him with all the excitement and adventures he could want, proves very infectious."

Although *The Phantom Tollbooth* received almost entirely favorable reviews, a few critics claimed that it was too sophisticated for children. "At that time, the received wisdom was that fantasy was bad because it disoriented children and that there should be no words in a book that a kid would not encounter elsewhere," Juster explained. "[But] I think really good books can be read by anybody. Sometimes I have a problem labeling a children's book as if it were some lesser form. There are good books and there are bad books, period, that's the distinction. A good book written for children can be read by adults."

As it turned out, Juster's book was beloved by children and adults alike. More than 40 years after *The Phantom Tollbooth* was first published, Juster continued to receive hundreds of letters from fans each year. Many people

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tell the author that his book changed their lives. "When you write a book like this, any book really, you have no idea whether it's going to resonate, whether it's going to mean anything at all to anyone else," Juster noted. "In fact, it seems to touch very much a set of universal ideas and circumstance for people, especially kids when they're about that age. It feels very good."

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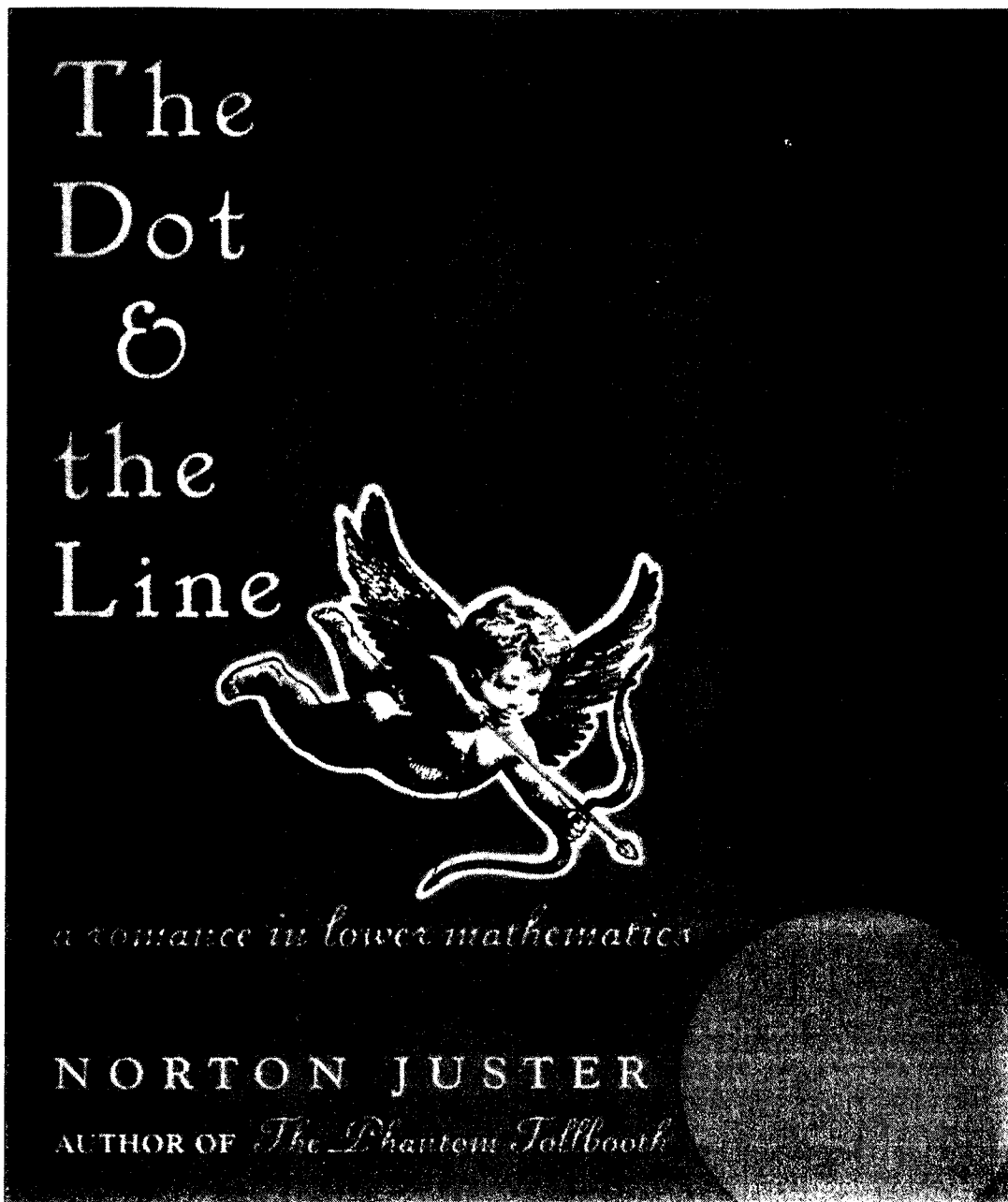
Writing Other Successful Books

The success of *The Phantom Tollbooth* helped convince Juster to continue writing books for children. His second book, *The Dot and the Line: A Romance in Lower Mathematics*, was published in 1963. This book tells the story of a sensible straight line who falls in love with a silly dot. Unfortunately, the dot is romantically involved with a lazy, good-for-nothing squiggle. The story follows the line's attempts to win the dot's affections. "It struck me as funny, this whole triangle," Juster related. "The squiggle is an absolutely disreputable character who treats women badly, yet they flock to him. I knew several people who were that way. I was more like the line."

Like Juster's first book, *The Dot and the Line* proved very popular with both readers and critics. It has remained in

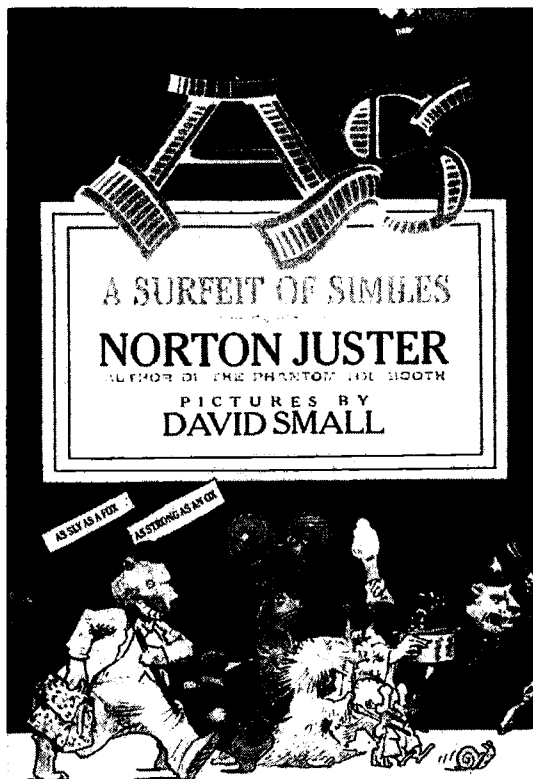
print since its initial publication and was reissued in a special edition in 2001. In 1965 it was adapted as an animated film by Chuck Jones. The film version won an Academy Award for Best Short Film.

Juster published his third book, *Alberic the Wise and Other Journeys*, in 1965. This book consists of three interconnected stories about a young man who discovers knowledge. As a boy, Alberic is fascinated by a stranger's descriptions of the exotic worlds beyond his village. As a young man, Alberic goes on a journey to discover his own talents. Although he fails to find an area in which he truly excels, he does accumulate knowledge about himself and the world. When Alberic finally returns to his village as an adult, he fascinates others with stories of his travels and earns the name Alberic the Wise. "The author's compelling prose, elevated without being lofty, will draw in advanced readers," wrote a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*.



Moving to the Country

In 1968 Juster and his wife of four years, Jeanne, bought a farm in rural Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts. They originally intended it to be a weekend cottage, but they decided to move there full-time in 1970. They spent the next 10 years restoring the farmhouse and property. In the meantime, Juster became a partner in a new architecture firm in Shelburne Falls, called Juster/Pope/Frazier Associates. He also took a position as a professor of design at Hampshire College in nearby Amherst, Massachusetts. Some of Juster's friends found it strange that the Brooklyn native moved to the



country. "My love of the country is influenced and heightened by my city experience and, conversely, my appreciation of the city has grown through the time spent here," he explained.

Juster's experience owning and restoring a farm gave him the idea for his next book. He became curious about how rural families—and especially farm women—handled the burden of farm work in earlier times. After conducting research and collecting materials for several years, Juster published an adult book in 1979 called *So Sweet to Labor: Rural Women in America, 1865-1895*. It is a collection of essays, letters, poetry, and recipes, written by and about farm

women from the Civil War to the turn of the century. Juster returned to this theme in his 1996 book *A Woman's Place: Yesterday's Women in Rural America*, which examines the conflict between women's traditional roles and the growing women's rights movement in the late 1800s.

In 1980 Juster and his family sold their farm and moved into the town of Amherst. The author wanted to make it easier for his daughter, Emily, to visit friends and get involved in activities. Juster published two more children's books in the 1980s. *Otter Nonsense*, published in 1982, is a picture book illustrated by Eric Carle. *As: A Surfeit of Similes*, published in 1989, tells the story of two gentlemen who travel the world to collect similes (figures of speech that involve comparisons between two different things). Writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, Diane Manuel called *As* "the kind of book that could help to sell youngsters on the devilish delights of well-turned phrases."

In the mid-1990s Juster retired from his career as an architect and professor of design. His retirement gave him more time to spend with his young granddaughter, who inspired him to write another book for children called *The Hello Goodbye Window*. "It's about my experiences with my granddaughter—the stories we make up together, what we see from our kitchen window that overlooks the garden," Juster explained. *The Hello Goodbye Window* is scheduled for publication in 2004.

Sharing His Thoughts about His Work

Juster is surprised but delighted by the enduring popularity of *The Phantom Tollbooth*. "A lot of things have happened because of the book," he noted. "It really did change my life. I've met a lot of people, I've gone places, getting invited here and there, and it's provided me with a lot of flexibility in my life because it brings in money and gives me a certain amount of freedom, which is always nice."

Juster continues to make appearances at schools and bookstores. He enjoys meeting and talking with young readers, who are always interested in learning more about Milo and his creator. Many fans of *The Phantom Tollbooth* want to know who sent Milo the tollbooth. "Frankly, I don't know where the tollbooth comes from," the author stated. "It was just there. We conjure things in our own minds to fulfill the requirements that we have. Obviously there was something inside Milo that was trying to get him out of that [boredom] so that he could understand the real joys of life, which are learning and being involved in things."

Readers often ask Juster how he got the idea for *The Phantom Tollbooth*. "People always ask about my influences, and they cite a bunch of people I've never heard of. My influences were my father, who loved to play with words, and the [legendary slapstick comedy team] the Marx Brothers," he stated. "What [the Marx Brothers] do—which is what this book tries to do—they turn the world absolutely upside-down, and look at things from a totally different way. And I guess that if there's any message in the book [it is that] you have to constantly look at things as if you've never seen them before."

Although Juster acknowledges that *The Phantom Tollbooth* contains a powerful message about the importance of learning, he did not set out to instruct readers. Instead, he wanted readers to discover the book's deeper meaning for themselves. "Almost any time you start with a message and

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The Dewitt Wallace Building in Williamsburg, Virginia, completed in 1995, was designed by the firm of Juster/Pope/Frazier Associates. Juster was the lead architect.

write your book from that you're in big trouble," he declared. "We convey many messages in the things that we write, but in many cases, especially with children, you don't want to end with 'This is what you should think.' You want to end with something that says, 'Now, you think about it.' To a child, and to an adult, too, what you discover by yourself, or what you think you discover by yourself, is what stays. Especially with children — they're immediately suspicious of anything that they're told."

Juster believes that the message in *The Phantom Tollbooth* is particularly appropriate for children, who often feel overwhelmed by the number of things they are expected to learn. "When you're very young and you learn something — a fact, a piece of information, whatever — it doesn't connect to anything," the author noted. "You don't know where it belongs, how you're supposed to use it, or of what possible utility it can be in the future. As you get older you find that things start to connect to other things, and when you reach my age nothing you learn doesn't connect to 20 other things. I think kids slowly begin to realize that what they're learning relates to other things they know. Then learning starts to get more and more exciting."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Juster married Jeanne Ray, a London-born graphic designer, on August 15, 1964. They have one adult daughter, Emily. Juster and his wife live in Amherst, Massachusetts.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

In his spare time, Juster enjoys gardening, bicycling, reading, and collecting old maps. Another of his hobbies is making pickles, chutneys, and jams. "Modesty prevents me from saying that my New York kosher pickles are the best in the world, but they're not far," he stated.

WRITINGS

For Children

The Phantom Tollbooth, 1961

The Dot and the Line: A Romance in Lower Mathematics, 1963

Alberic the Wise and Other Journeys, 1965

Otter Nonsense, 1982

As: A Surfeit of Similes, 1989

For Adults

Stark Naked: A Paranomastic Odyssey, 1970

So Sweet to Labor: Rural Women in America, 1865-1895, 1979

A Woman's Place: Yesterday's Rural Women in America, 1996

HONORS AND AWARDS

50 Best Children's Books (*New York Times*): 1966, for *The Phantom Tollbooth*

50 Books of the Year (American Institute of Graphic Arts): 1966, for *Alberic the Wise and Other Journeys*

Outstanding Achievement Award (National Academy of Arts and Sciences): 1968

Seventh Recognition of Merit (George G. Stone Center for Children's Books): 1971

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Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature, 2001

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Silvey, Anita, ed. *Children's Books and Their Creators*, 1995
Something about the Author, Vol. 3, 1972; Vol. 132, 2002
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(*Powells.com*, "Author Interview: Norton Juster, Beyond Expectations,"
April 2002)

Online Databases

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, articles from *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2000; *St. James Guide to Fantasy Writers*, 1996; and *St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers*, 1999

ADDRESS

Norton Juster
Random House Children's Books
1745 Broadway
10th Floor
New York, NY 10019

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.randomhouse.com>
<http://www.justerpopefrazier.com>



Lurlene McDaniel 1944-

American Writer of Novels for Young Adults
Author of More than 60 Books, Including *Six Months
to Live* and *Don't Die, My Love*

BIRTH

Lurlene McDaniel was born Lurlene Nora Gallagher on April 5, 1944, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her father, James Gallagher, was an officer in the U.S. Navy, and her mother, Bebe (Donaldson) Gallagher, was a homemaker.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION

Throughout McDaniel's childhood, her family moved around frequently as her father was stationed at different naval bases. They eventually ended up in Florida, where McDaniel completed much of her schooling. Even as a

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“Sometimes tragedy hits people, even kids. They want answers. They want to know why. By using novels, I show ordinary kids confronting and overcoming great odds. . . . My novels deal with characters facing, through no fault of their own, a life-altering event—usually medical in nature—and overcoming the event. Sometimes my characters actually die in the book, but this leads readers to tell me, ‘It was like real life.’ The ultimate message I want to send my audience is simply that no one can control what life dishes out. What you can control is how you respond to it.”

”

girl, she loved to read and write stories. “I loved horse stories—read all of the Black Stallion series, *My Friend Flicka*, dog stories, and the venerable Nancy Drew books,” she recalled. “I can’t remember a time when I didn’t love to write and tell stories. My earliest childhood memories were of crawling up on my favorite uncle’s lap and demanding that he ‘read the book.’ I started writing poems and stories in the first grade and by third grade had written a play that was performed by my classmates. By high school I was editor of the school newspaper and yearbook.” McDaniel completed her education at the University of South Florida in 1965, earning a bachelor’s degree in English, with a minor in advertising and public relations.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Lurlene McDaniel has been called “the queen of inspirational novels for teens.” She has published over 60 books during her 20-year career. Most of her works center around a teen-aged character who is going through a major crisis, usually involving a serious illness or death. For this reason, her books are often referred to as “ten-hankie novels” or “teenaged tear-

jerkers.” Despite their somber subject matter, however, McDaniel’s books have sold millions of copies and attracted a devoted following of readers between the ages of 10 and 16. Reviewers sometimes criticize her works as predictable and melodramatic, and parents occasionally question why their

kids want to read books about such depressing subjects. But McDaniel's many fans claim that her novels are uplifting and life-affirming, as they feature young characters who show courage and strength in the face of overwhelming difficulties.

"Sometimes tragedy hits people, even kids. They want answers. They want to know why. By using novels, I show ordinary kids confronting and overcoming great odds," McDaniel explained. "Unwittingly, I seem to have struck a chord in the hearts of girls 10 to 16 years old. My novels deal with characters facing, through no fault of their own, a life-altering event—usually medical in nature—and overcoming the event. Sometimes my characters actually die in the book, but this leads readers to tell me, 'It was like real life.' The ultimate message I want to send my audience is simply that no one can control what life dishes out. What you can control is how you respond to it."

Son's Illness Leads to a Career as Novelist

McDaniel got married shortly after she graduated from college. For the next few years she worked for television stations in Tampa, Florida, and Lansing, Michigan. "I got my degree in English, and knew I didn't want to teach, so I ended up at a television station writing promos and commercials," she stated. "But I'm glad I started that way because it taught me to write short and sweet." McDaniel left the work force a few years later when she became pregnant with her first child. She continued doing freelance advertising work at home—writing commercials for local companies and public service announcements—while raising her two sons, Sean and Erik.

McDaniel's peaceful life changed dramatically when her older son, Sean, became critically ill at the age of three. He began losing weight and feeling tired all the time, but doctors were unable to find the problem. Sean finally became so sick that his mother took him to the emergency room, where he was finally diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. People who suffer from diabetes cannot produce sufficient amounts of the hormone insulin, which aids in the digestion of sugars. Although there is no cure, the disease can often be managed through careful attention to diet, an exercise program, and insulin injections. Without proper management, diabetes can lead to such serious complications as the amputation of limbs, heart and kidney disease, and death.

McDaniel went through an anxious night as doctors struggled to stabilize her son's condition. After the crisis was over, she learned everything she could about diabetes and how to manage it. Through her son's illness, she

experienced firsthand how dealing with chronic illness can affect a family. "The diagnosis, juvenile diabetes, changed all our lives forever," she said. "He became wedded to twice-daily insulin shots, diet management, and regular exercise, while I became intent on learning how to best manage his illness. I dedicated many years to his well-being."

When McDaniel's son was about 10 years old, they attended an event for diabetics. The event coordinator struck up a conversation with McDaniel. Upon learning that she was a writer, the woman mentioned that her father owned a publishing company that marketed children's books to school systems. McDaniel agreed to try her hand at writing children's books for this company, School Book Fairs, and its Willowisp imprint. "I think they were just looking for someone who could meet a deadline, and I was used to that," she noted.

McDaniel's first attempts at writing children's fiction involved picture books. But her first success came with a young adult novel that was drawn from her own experience. "My first book was *Kickeroo — The Soccer-Playing Kangaroo*," she recalled. "It didn't take me long to know writing picture books wasn't for me. But next I wrote a book called *Will I Ever Dance Again?* about a girl diagnosed with diabetes." Published in 1982, *Will I Ever Dance Again?* tells the story of a teenaged ballet student struggling to deal

with her chronic illness. The book proved so popular that the publisher asked McDaniel to write more stories about young characters overcoming a medical problem. *Will I Ever Dance Again?* thus became the first in McDaniel's long line of signature works about teenaged characters coping with health crises.



Writing *Six Months to Live*

McDaniel's breakthrough as an author came in 1985, when she published *Six Months to Live*. This book sold over one million copies and remains one of her most popular works nearly 20 years later. *Six Months to Live* introduced the character of Dawn Rochelle, who went on to appear in four more of

McDaniel's novels. In this first book, 13-year-old Dawn is diagnosed with leukemia, a form of cancer that affects the bone marrow and other blood-forming systems in the body. While undergoing chemotherapy in the hospital, Dawn meets Sandy, a girl her age who is being treated for the same disease. The two teens become close friends and help each other deal with the difficult treatment process. Both girls' cancer goes into remission, and they attend a summer camp for cancer survivors together. But afterward Sandy's symptoms return.

The book was a big hit. A few years after its publication, *Six Months to Live* was placed in a literary time capsule at the Library of Congress. The book was selected by young readers in a contest sponsored by the Reading Is Fundamental program. Children across the United States nominated their favorite books and wrote essays explaining why they liked them so much. *Six Months to Live* was the most nominated book in the nation, so it was included in the time capsule along with the top nomination letters from young readers.

Later books in the "Dawn Rochelle" series include *I Want to Live* (1987), *So Much to Live For* (1991), *No Time to Cry* (1993), and *To Live Again* (2001). As the series progresses, Dawn grows from 13 to 17 and moves through middle school to high school. In *I Want to Live*, 14-year-old Dawn suffers a relapse of her leukemia and requires a bone-marrow transplant from her brother. In *So Much to Live For*, 15-year-old Dawn's cancer is back in remission and she returns to the cancer camp as a counselor. But Dawn's medical problems return in *To Live Again*, when the 17-year-old suffers a relapse as she is preparing to go away to college.

Creating the "One Last Wish" Series

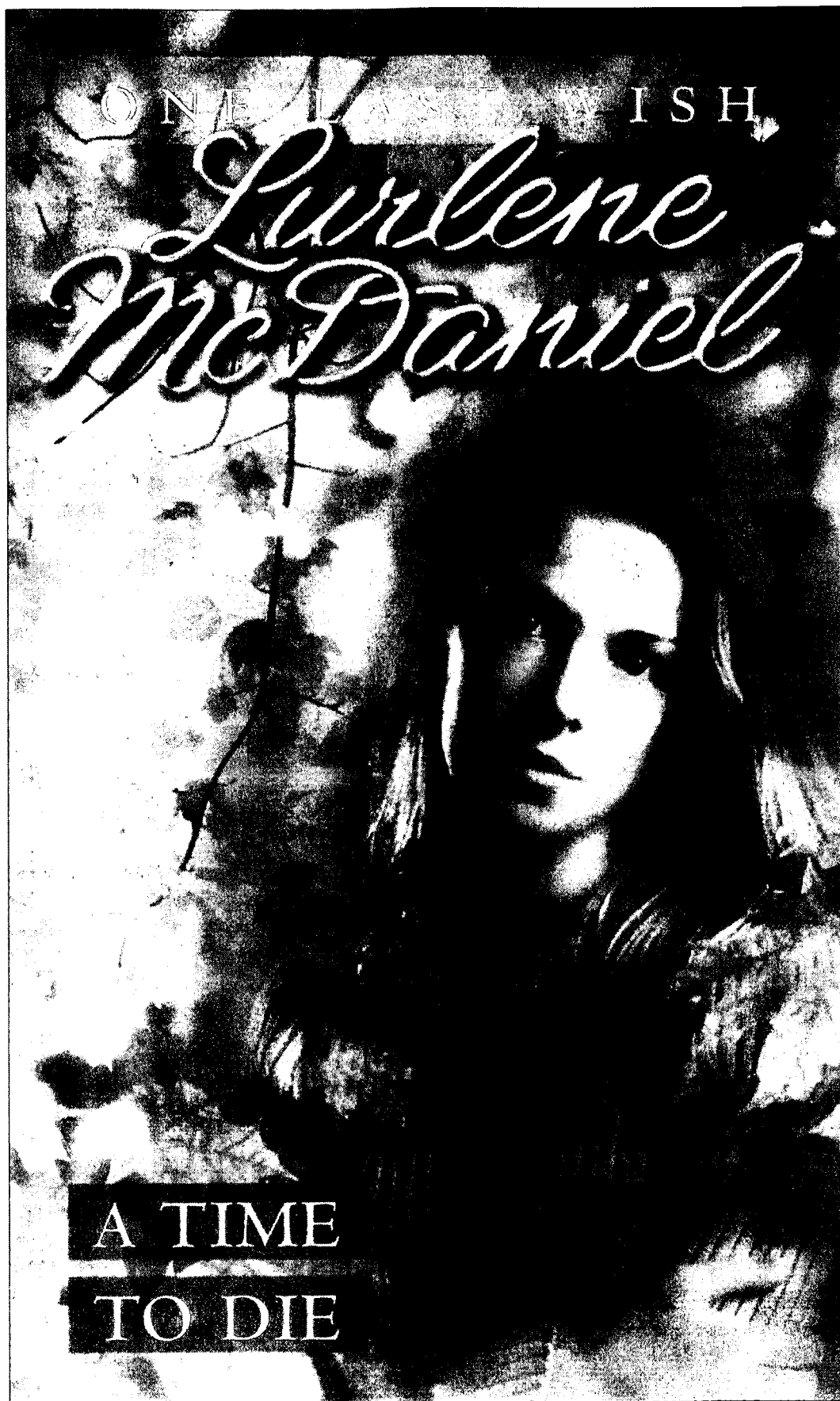
In 1987, as McDaniel was in the midst of writing her "Dawn Rochelle" series, she and her husband of 21 years divorced. The author felt that she

*Lurlene
McDaniel*



SIX MONTHS
TO LIVE

A Dawn Rochelle Novel



needed to earn more money from her novels, so she hired a literary agent to represent her. After publishing 23 books with tiny Willowisp, McDaniel signed a contract to write for the paperback-publishing giant Bantam Books. Her novels, which had already attracted a devoted following of young readers, suddenly became available to a much larger audience. In her work for Bantam, McDaniel developed a productive relationship with a professional editor for the first time. She felt that the quality of her work improved as a result.

But McDaniel's sensitive treatment of characters dealing with serious health issues remained the key to her popularity. "Few people wrote about the chronically ill, so people who had illnesses never saw themselves in literature. I started writing about kids with chronic illnesses, and [the books] were just enormously successful," she stated. "The genre has been good to me. I like to write stories that leave a little catch in your throat and make you feel good. But it was never a goal."

Shortly after switching to Bantam, McDaniel launched her popular "One Last Wish" series of books. This series eventually grew to include 12 novels — published between 1992 and 1999 — that are linked together by a common theme. In each book, a mysterious donor gives a dying teen a gift of \$100,000 to spend however he or she wants. Some of the characters from the earlier books reappear in later books, as well. For example, *Someone Dies, Someone Lives* (1992) introduces the character of Katie O'Roark. Katie is a high-school track star until she develops heart problems and needs a transplant. She receives a gift from an anonymous donor that enables her family to afford the procedure. While Katie is in the hospital recovering from her surgery, she meets Josh Martel. Josh's teenage brother has died, and his family donated his organs. Katie reappears in *Please Don't Die* (1993), in which she goes to Jenny House as a counselor to help other teens struggling with serious health problems.

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Personal Adversity Fuels Her Writing

In 1993 McDaniel was diagnosed with breast cancer. Fortunately, her cancer was caught early and she made a complete recovery following surgery and radiation treatment. McDaniel used her own fight against cancer in her future books to make her characters' struggles more realistic. One example is her 1995 novel *Don't Die, My Love*. "I wrote the book *Don't Die, My Love* as I was going through radiation, so it certainly has an air of authenticity about it because I was there," she explained. "I think all of my

books took on a kind of a deeper tone."

———— “ ————

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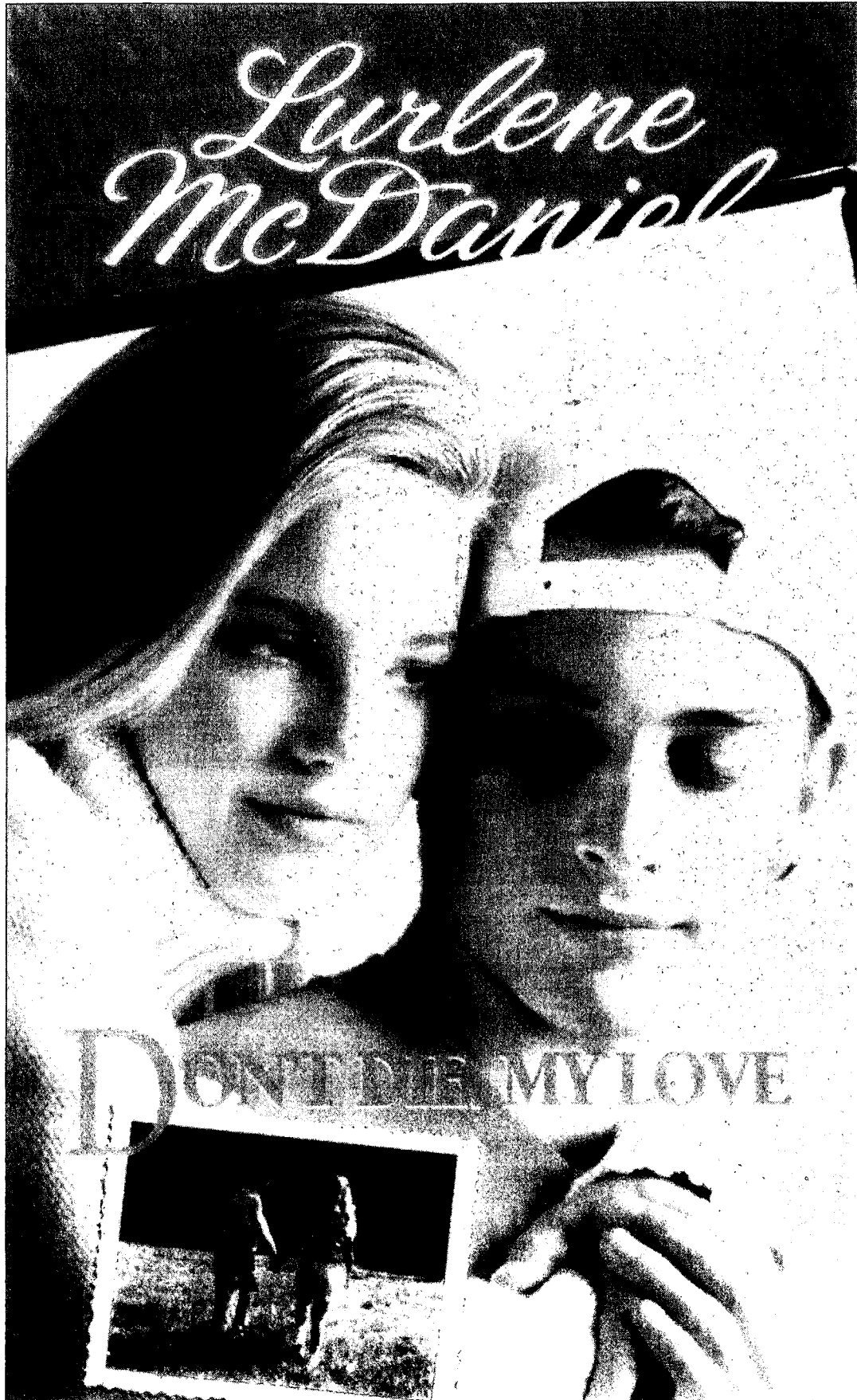
Don't Die, My Love tells the story of Julie and Luke, a popular and attractive high-school couple who have been dating since sixth grade and plan to get married after graduation. They are stunned when Luke, a handsome football star, is diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease — a type of cancer affecting the lymphatic system, which carries fluid to the body's tissues. The story follows the couple, their families, and the school community as they struggle to deal with Luke's illness. "The novel contains excellent information on cancer treatment and

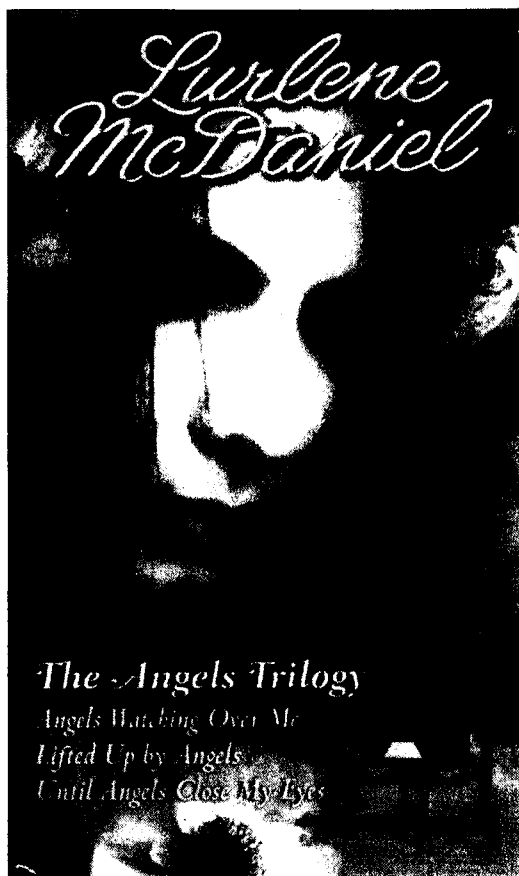
the emotional world of cancer victims and those who love them," wrote Jana R. Fine in *School Library Journal*. "McDaniel shows her literary expertise by humanizing a terrible disease and guiding readers through the whole process."

Don't Die, My Love was turned into a television movie called *A Champion's Fight*, which was broadcast on NBC in 1999. Some of McDaniel's fans were disappointed that the ending of the movie was different from the novel. But McDaniel enjoyed seeing her story on TV. "It was fun to see my characters 'come to life' and 'speak' many of the words I'd created for them," she noted.

The "Angels" Trilogy

McDaniel is a devout Christian who tries to imbue all of her works with "a sense of eternal purpose." "My characters face death with the strength and courage that comes from a belief in God and a hope for eternal life," she





noted. "I don't push a Christian agenda on my readers. I don't preach to them—if someone wants a sermon, they can go to church."

Among McDaniel's novels, the ones that deal with religion most directly are probably those in the "Angels" trilogy. The first book in the series, *Angels Watching Over Me*, was published in 1996. The main character, Leah, is diagnosed with cancer. During her treatment in the hospital, she makes friends with an Amish girl named Rebekah. The two girls come to believe that they were visited by an angel. "When I wrote *Angels Watching Over Me*, there was a lot of stuff in the general marketplace about angels," McDaniel recalled. "I wanted to present a biblical angel. But it took me forever to think of a way to talk

about them. I had to find the perfect vehicle for talking about the things of God and angels without sounding contrived."

Angels Watching Over Me was so successful that it became the first book in a trilogy, which also includes *Lifted Up by Angels* (1997) and *Until Angels Close My Eyes* (1998). McDaniel enjoyed following Leah's story in successive novels. "It was wonderful getting to know the characters so well—a nice perk I don't usually get to enjoy," she noted. "Most of my main characters don't survive."

Meeting Readers' Expectations

In order to please her huge following of young readers, McDaniel makes sure that all of her books share certain elements in common. "When I write, my goal is to write a good book and a fresh, interesting story. But I have reader expectations to fulfill," she acknowledged. "My readers expect an intriguing story, a challenge to overcome, a romantic element, and a certain morality."

In addition to the spiritual element in her books, McDaniel is also known for providing realistic details about her characters' illnesses and medical

treatments. She obtains this information by reading medical journals, interviewing experts, and working with cancer societies, hospice organizations, and organ donor services. "I was always fascinated by things medical. Maybe I'm really a frustrated doctor," she stated. "I have a responsibility to my readers to be accurate. I call a spade a spade. If somebody vomits, they vomit."

McDaniel tries never to shy away from difficult or controversial subject matter. For example, a trip to Africa inspired her to write about the problems of poverty, hunger, and disease facing many poor nations around the world in her books *Angel of Mercy* (1999) and *Angel of Hope* (2000). These novels feature Heather Barlow, an idealistic young woman who wants to make a difference in the world. In the first book, Heather goes to Uganda as a volunteer for a relief organization and is unprepared for the terrible conditions she finds there. In the sequel, Heather returns home and convinces her mother, a plastic surgeon, to treat Ugandan children. But Heather becomes ill and cannot make the trip back to Africa. Her spoiled younger sister, Amber, takes her place and matures quickly through the experience.

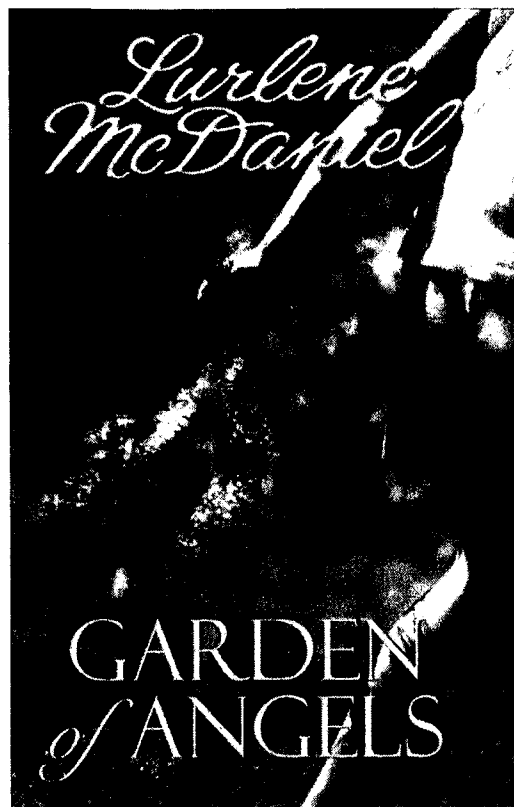
"I wanted to write about the third world and had the opportunity to go live in the trenches, so to speak," McDaniel explained. "I wanted to show what it's really like for 98 percent of the world's population. Plus, I also see there are an awful lot of young people out there doing good things, and I wanted to give them a platform. I created a character whose motives were pure and good and she was going to go out and save the whole world. But the truth is, you can't save the whole world, but you can save one. And that was the whole thrust of the novel."

In her most recent works, McDaniel has continued to explore the difficult world of teens facing serious illnesses—in themselves and in those they

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"I get hundreds of letters a year — so much mail that I had to hire a part-time secretary to help handle it all. I can't tell you how much my readers mean to me and how much their letters mean to me. They help keep me on track. I wouldn't trade my lifestyle for anything. Mail from my readers brightens my days as each letter reminds me that a real live kid is reading and being affected by my work."

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love. *The Time Capsule* (2003) features the twins Alexis and Adam. Adam is suffering from leukemia, which is now in remission. But the family fell apart after receiving the bad news, and the twins' parents can't seem to make time to spend with them. Alexis soon learns that she will have to step up to help out. *Garden of Angels* (2003) is set in 1974. The Vietnam War has just recently ended, but the county is still struggling to deal with its aftermath. The story focuses on Darcy, who has just started high school. Her life and her emotions seem upside down, as she tries to cope with her feelings about the war, the soldiers, and a new boy at school. But her mother has just been diagnosed with cancer, and Darcy's world will be changed forever.

Connecting with Her Fans

McDaniel's days are filled with writing, speaking engagements at writers' conferences, book signings, and school visits. She loves connecting with her young fans, especially through the many letters she receives in the mail. "I get hundreds of letters a year — so much mail that I had to hire a part-time secretary to help handle it all. I can't tell you how much my readers mean to me and how much their letters mean to me. They help keep me on track," she noted. "I wouldn't trade my lifestyle for anything. Mail

from my readers brightens my days as each letter reminds me that a real live kid is reading and being affected by my work."

McDaniel hopes that her readers come away from her books with a renewed appreciation for the preciousness of life and health. "I write the kind of books I write because I want to help kids to understand that nobody gets to pick what life dishes out to them. What you do get to choose is how you respond to what life gives you. No matter what happens, life is a gift. And always worth living," she stated. "I remind my readers that good things can come out of bad things. To wit—my entire novel-writing career came out of my son's diagnosis of diabetes. The doors of life are always opening and presenting challenges."

McDaniel's readers often ask her advice on how to launch a successful writing career. "To those of you who want to be writers and want writing tips, I say 'read, read, read' and practice writing stories and keeping journals," she responds. "Get a good education and never give up your dream."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Lurlene Gallagher married Joe McDaniel on March 12, 1965. They had two sons, Sean Clifford and Erik James, before divorcing in 1987. Both of the author's sons are now grown and healthy, though Sean still must manage his diabetes through insulin shots, diet, and exercise.

McDaniel lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee, which she has called "the most wonderful city in the world." Although she works out of her home, she must keep regular working hours in order to produce three new novels each year. "I have a lovely home office with a large bay window that looks out onto my backyard, full of colorful flowers and a creek," she said. "Sunny Southern skies and buckets of sunshine are also a plus. Beautiful scenes like this inspire me."

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SELECTED WRITINGS

Young Adult Novels

Will I Ever Dance Again? 1982
If I Should Die Before I Wake, 1983
Why Did She Have to Die? 1986
Mother, Please Don't Die, 1988
Too Young to Die, 1989
Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep, 1991
Baby Alicia Is Dying, 1993
Don't Die, My Love, 1995
Till Death Do Us Part, 1997
The Girl Death Left Behind, 1999
Angel of Mercy, 1999
Angel of Hope, 2000
How Do I Love Thee? 2001
Telling Christina Goodbye, 2002
The Time Capsule, 2003
Garden of Angels, 2003

"Dawn Rochelle" Series

Six Months to Live, 1985
I Want to Live, 1987
So Much to Live For, 1991
No Time to Cry, 1993
Dawn Rochelle: Four Novels, 2000
To Live Again, 2001

"One Last Wish" Series

A Time to Die, 1992
Mourning Song, 1992
Mother, Help Me Live, 1992
Someone Dies, Someone Lives, 1992
Sixteen and Dying, 1992
Let Him Live, 1992
The Legacy: Making Wishes Come True, 1993
Please Don't Die, 1993
She Died Too Young, 1994
A Season for Goodbye, 1995
One Last Wish: Three Novels, 1998
Reach for Tomorrow, 1999

"Angels" Trilogy

Angels Watching Over Me, 1996
Lifted Up by Angels, 1997
Until Angels Close My Eyes, 1998

HONORS AND AWARDS

RITA Award (Romance Writers of America): 1991, for *Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*
Children's Choice Books (International Reading Association): for *Somewhere between Life and Death*, *Too Young to Die*, and *Goodbye Doesn't Mean Forever*
Books for the Reluctant Reader (American Library Association): for *A Season for Goodbye*, *Till Death Do Us Part*, and *The Girl Death Left Behind*

FURTHER READING

Books

Authors and Artists for Young Adults, Vol. 15, 1995; Vol. 38, 2001
Contemporary Authors, Vol. 148, 1996
The 100 Most Popular Young Adult Authors, 1996
Something about the Author, Vol. 71, 1993

Periodicals

Chattanooga (Tenn.) Free Press, June 6, 1997, p.D8; Dec. 7, 1998, p.C1
Chattanooga (Tenn.) Times, Jan. 15, 1996, p.B1
Publishers Weekly, Apr. 6, 1992, p.23

Online Articles

<http://www.eclectics.com>
(*Kids Reads at The Book Report on AOL*, "Lurlene McDaniel Interview," undated)
<http://www.bookpage.com>
(*First Person Book Page*, "Missions of Mercy Inspire Lurlene McDaniel's Angelic Series," July 2000)

Online Databases

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, articles from *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, 2001, and *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2001

ADDRESS

Lurlene McDaniel
Bantam Books
1540 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/lurlene>
<http://www.eclectics.com/lurlenemcdaniel>



Stephanie S. Tolan 1942-

American Writer for Children and Young Adults
Author of *Surviving the Applewhites*, the "Great Skinner" Series, and *Guiding the Gifted Child*

BIRTH

Stephanie S. Tolan was born Stephanie Stein on October 25, 1942, in Canton, Ohio. Her parents were Joseph and Mary (Schroy) Stein. She had an older sister and an older brother.

YOUTH

Tolan became fascinated with books at a very young age. Her mother had worked as a librarian before having children, and she began to read to Stephanie when she was a baby. As she grew older, Tolán often used a flashlight to read under her bed covers late into the night. "That joy in reading," she once said, "made me want to be a writer, and from the time I was nine years old, I never doubted that I would be one." Tolán remembers *David Copperfield* as an influential book from her childhood. She was too young to grasp all of the finer points of Charles Dickens's story, but she

has never forgotten the characters and how they magically came alive in her imagination.

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Tolan wrote her first story when she was in the fourth grade. "It was a story about a baby volcano who accidentally started the first Fourth of July celebration. I still have the story, neatly copied in ink. It's pretty terrible, but at the time I loved it because writing that story gave me my first clue that I could make the magic I had long known in books."

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When Tolán was eight years old, her family moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin. She enjoyed an active childhood of riding horses and climbing trees. But writing remained her passion. Tolán wrote her first story when she was in the fourth grade. "It was a story about a baby volcano who accidentally started the first Fourth of July celebration," she recalled. "I still have the story, neatly copied in ink. It's pretty terrible, but at the time I loved it because writing that story gave me my first clue that I could make the magic I had long known in books. It still seems to me magical that the human brain can imagine whole worlds and people and stories, turn them into little marks on paper, and then other brains can translate those marks into images, into worlds and people and stories."

By age 11 Tolán had submitted stories for publication in *Jack and Jill* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Despite receiving a number of rejection slips for these early efforts, she continued to write through her high school years. In fact, she called herself "the girl with the spiral notebook" because she used her school notebook to write novels during class. "In high school writing was the thing that took me away from what I was supposed to be doing," she remembered. "'The girl with the spiral notebook' wrote stories in Latin class. The spiral notebook was supposed to have translations of Caesar's

Gallic wars. Each notebook would start with four pages of translations, and then it would sort of transmogrify [change] itself into a novel that would go on for the rest of that notebook.”

EDUCATION

Tolan was a bright girl who always got straight A’s without having to work very hard at her studies. After graduating from high school in Kenosha around 1960, she attended Purdue University in Indiana. She earned a bachelor’s degree in creative writing in 1964, then went on to earn a master’s degree in English in 1967. Tolan began publishing poetry while in college, and she also started writing plays. One of the plays she wrote during this time — *The Ledge*, about the Vietnam War — is still occasionally performed on stage.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Stephanie S. Tolan is the author of more than 20 books for children and young adults. Her work often focuses on real-life issues that concern young people. For example, some of her books explore such difficult or controversial subjects as Alzheimer’s disease, homosexuality, religious cults, homelessness, poverty, and prejudice. Tolan’s main characters are usually outsiders or unpopular kids who struggle with challenging situations. By creating characters that her readers can identify with, Tolan helps children believe that they are of worthwhile people — no matter who they are, where they come from, or what kind of problems they must overcome.

Tolan has great respect for children and their ability to cope with difficult issues. She includes such issues in her work in order to prepare her readers for the problems they may face as they go through life. “It seems we have less and less respect for kids’ minds,” she explained. “We assume they can’t think so we offer them less and less to think about and we protect them more and more from ideas and more and more from complexities. It’s a scary world and as adults get more scared, we do exactly the opposite of what we should be doing for kids.”

Tolan summarized her personal conviction in writing her books. “Since beginning my first novel for young readers in 1976, I have found myself growing more and more committed both to writing fiction for children and young adults and to supporting the rights of the young in a culture that seems less and less interested in providing for its children,” she stated. “Whether shown in the increased number of child abuse cases, in the deterioration of our educational system, in the refusal of property owners to

rent to families, in the political trend to ignore the needs of the poor . . . there is a real—and disturbing—unwillingness to do what must be done to meet the needs of the younger generation. As a mother, stepmother, writer, and human being, I feel I must do whatever I can to help change this trend.”

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Teaching and Raising a Family

Tolan started her family life fairly early. After earning her bachelor's degree, she married theater director Robert W. Tolan. She also became the stepmother to his three young sons. As she pursued a graduate degree, Tolan began teaching to supplement her family's income. She was an instructor in continuing education at Purdue from 1966 to 1970. When her husband's job took the family to New York, she joined the faculty in speech and theater at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Following another move, Tolan became an adjunct faculty member in English at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Although she was busy raising a family and working, Tolan never lost her love for writing. She continued to publish poetry and plays over the years. Then, in the early 1970s, a combination of factors led her toward writing fiction for children and young adults. One factor was the connection she made with young readers while visiting schools through the National Endowment for the Arts Poets-in-the-Schools program. “I met the new

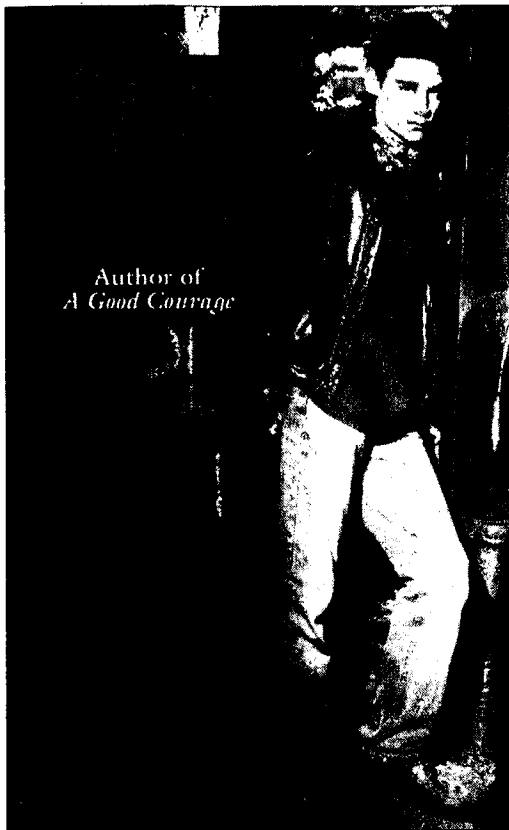
generation of readers who still stay up late with flashlights to read,” she related. “Maybe television has cut back on the numbers of such readers, but they're everywhere still, and they still lose themselves in the worlds created

by those magical black marks on white pages. Working with those children and helping them express themselves through their own writing, I realized I had found my real audience. . . . They brought back to me that special reading joy that most adults—even readers among us—have lost. And I wanted to try my hand at writing for those kids, so like myself at their age and yet so different.”

Another factor that pushed Tolan toward writing children’s books was the birth of a son in 1972. She wrote her first children’s story while she was pregnant and submitted it to a publishing house. The editor liked it, but turned it down because it was too “old-fashioned.” Tolan had written the kind of story she enjoyed reading as a child. But she did not realize that children’s literature had changed significantly over the years. As her son grew, Tolan read many books to him and discovered contemporary children’s fiction. “I fell totally in love with what was out there,” she recalled. “It was an open time, it was an exciting time, it was a time of really serious literature for kids. I thought it was wonderful because you could write about anything, all you had to do is put it in a child’s world, to have a young protagonist [main character], but that’s a fun thing.”

In 1975 Tolan quit teaching and dedicated herself to writing children’s books. Her first effort, a realistic middle-grade novel called *Grandpa—and Me*, was published in 1978. It tells the story of Kerry, a young girl who struggles to come to terms with the declining mental capacity of her grandfather, who is diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. The book deals with the issue of aging from a child’s perspective, as Kerry observes her grandfather’s behavior and its effect on her family. Tolan drew upon her own family’s experiences with Alzheimer’s disease, and the eventual suicide of her grandfather, while writing the book. “*Grandpa—and Me* was something I deeply wanted to write—it’s very personal,” she acknowledged. “I thought it was very risky, and when I sent it off [to a publisher] I was biting my fingernails.” But the book was accepted by the first pub-





lisher she sent it to, and it received critical praise for providing a realistic look at a difficult issue.

Young Adult Novels

Tolan has produced an average of one book per year since the 1970 publication of *Grandpa — and Me*. She has written several books for younger readers, but the majority of her works are novels for young adults that focus on teenaged characters facing difficult, real-life issues. One example is *A Good Courage*, published in 1988. This novel tells the story of 14-year-old Ty (short for Tie-Dye), whose free-spirited mother pursues an alternative lifestyle that includes communes and religious cults. They wind up in the Kingdom of Yahweh, a religious cult

led by the fanatical Brother Daniel. Ty's difficult experiences there force him to face some equally difficult choices. *School Library Journal* selected *A Good Courage* as one of the best young adult titles of the year in 1988.

One of Tolan's most unsettling novels is *Plague Year*, which was published in 1990. This book tells the story of Bran Slocum, a high school student who goes to live with his aunt and uncle in a small town after his father is accused of being a serial killer. Since Bran looks and acts different from the other kids at his new school, he has trouble fitting in. Then some of his fellow students find out about Bran's family background, and their initial hostility toward him expands into violence and tragedy. *Plague Year* has been used widely in schools to help students talk about violence, especially following such real-life incidents as the student shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado. A writer for *Horn Book* called Tolan's novel "a contemporary morality play that offers ample opportunity for discussion of ethical behavior."

Two of Tolan's most popular young adult novels were inspired by her work with intellectually gifted children. *Welcome to the Ark*, published in 1996, introduces four troubled kids — between the ages of eight and 17 — who live in an experimental group home. Each of the teens possesses a special intellectual gift that has made it difficult for them to deal with their fami-

lies and schools. As the psychologists who run the home help them to develop their abilities, the kids form an intimate psychic connection with one another. They reach out to other gifted kids to form the Ark—a group that works together to end violence and find better solutions to the world's problems. Tolan uses an unusual format in the novel, interspersing e-mail messages, journal entries, and poetry with the narrative to allow the reader to gain insight into the different characters' perspectives. "Though the story line may be difficult for some young readers to grasp at first, the unconventional form and the compelling subject matter will pull them into the novel for a fast-paced reading experience," Ted Hipple wrote in *Writers for Young Adults*. "Tolan does a superb job depicting emotionally disturbed, gifted youth," added Jacqueline Rose in *Voice of Youth Advocates*.

In 2001 Tolan published a sequel to *Welcome to the Ark* entitled *Flight of the Raven*. This story begins with a terrorist attack on the United States that is carried out by a secret anti-government group called the Free Mountain Militia. Soon afterward, the militia captures Elijah, one of the gifted kids from the first novel, and holds him hostage. When Elijah befriends Amber, the daughter of the terrorist group's leader, he slowly becomes part of the group and begins using his special abilities to help them. But the two young people face difficult choices when they learn that the militia is planning to launch a biological war using genetically engineered smallpox virus. *Flight of the Raven* attracted a great deal of attention when it came out two weeks after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Many reviewers noted that the novel's topic was timely, though several complained about its excessive violence and slow pace. "Its pacing and doleful tone might be a turn off to some readers," Karen Jensen wrote in *Voice of Youth Advocates*, "but Tolan creates characters that the reader cares about and a conflict that pulls one all the way through."

Tolan has branched into the supernatural in several of her works for young adults. In *The Witch of Maple Park* (1992), for example, a psychic teen believes that the child for whom she is babysitting is going to be kidnaped by a witch. The teen soon finds out that the witch is not what she seems. Tolan drew upon her interest in theater to write *The*



When you disappeared from the lodge I thought you'd gone home
 It's such a long time ago, but I remember
 It's lonely at midnight in the nurseries, remember?
 I remember
 So tell me what this group home is all about.
 I don't know, I thought except that we were supposed to be a family
 At night it's colder than stars at the lodge
 I still have my ankle bracelet.
 It's not a matter of

Face in the Mirror (1998). In this book, the ghost of a 19th-century actor tries to get two half-brothers to kill one another as they act in a Shakespearean play. Commenting on *The Face in the Mirror* for *Booklist*, Chris Sherman noted that "Tolan artfully weaves Shakespeare's *Richard III*, sibling rivalry, revenge, and a haunted theater with a vindictive ghost into a suspenseful story."

“

“Surviving the Applewhites was my funny book, and I’m so pleased that was the one that won [the Newbery Honor Award],” Tolan said. “We’re in dire need of humor—to be able to look at the world around us and find something fundamentally positive. The characters in this book have passion about what they do. They’re a family that truly loves each other, even if they squabble—who care and cooperate and work together. We need to see that, maybe more than ever.”

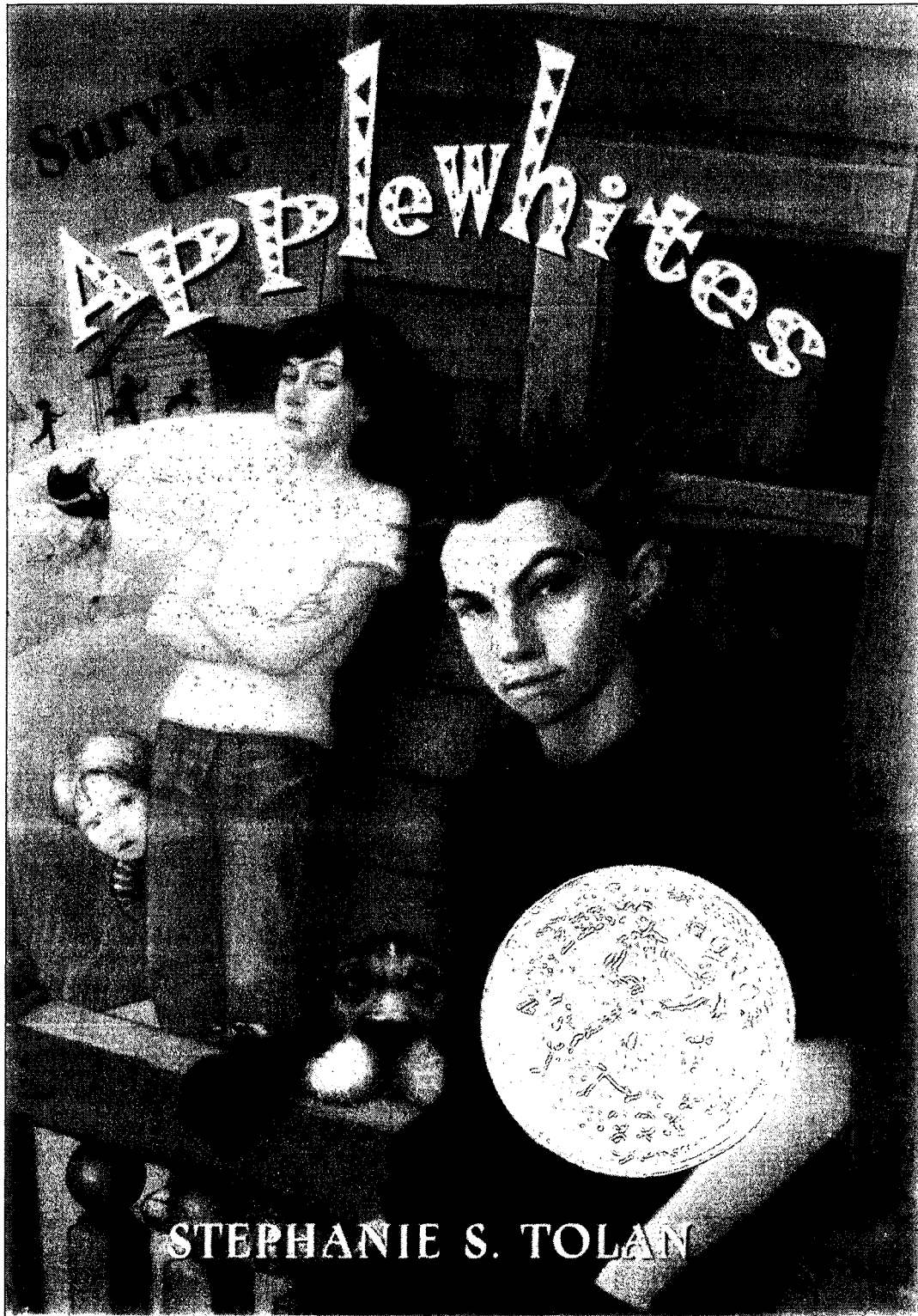
”

Surviving the Applewhites

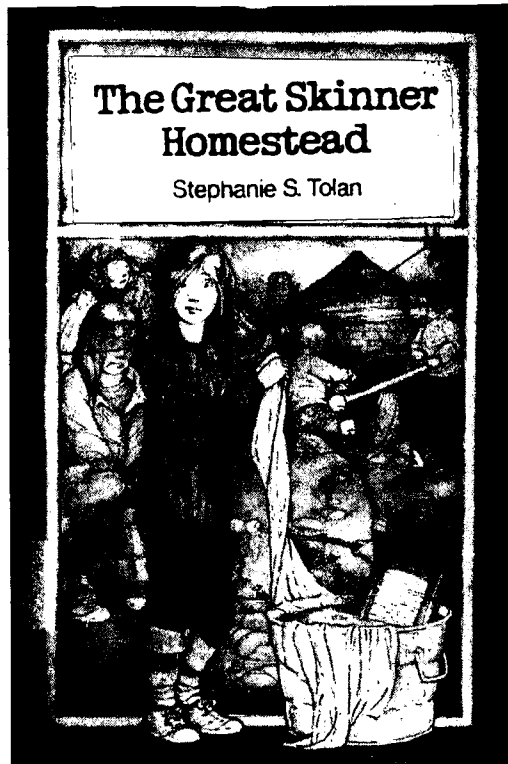
Tolan published her most critically acclaimed young adult novel, *Surviving the Applewhites*, in 2002. This humorous book tells the story of Jake Semple, a 13-year-old juvenile delinquent who has been kicked out of several schools. He is finally sent away to the Creative Academy, a “home-school” run by the eccentric Applewhite family on their rural North Carolina farm. Jake thus enters a chaotic household full of energetic artists. The only “normal” member of the family is 12-year-old daughter E.D., who takes an immediate dislike to spiky-haired Jake. The story is told by Jake and E.D. in alternating chapters. It culminates in a family production of *The Sound of Music*, in which everyone—including a reformed Jake—takes part.

Surviving the Applewhites was hailed as a hilarious story about a boy’s journey of self-discovery. “Clever, clever. Tolan has pulled off something special here,” Ilene Cooper wrote in *Booklist*. “She takes a rather predic-

table plot (tough kid is tamed by exposure to a good family) and twists it into a screwball comedy that pushes the story to a whole new place.” In 2003, the American Library Association selected the novel as a Newbery Honor Book, one of five runners-up for the Newbery Medal—the highest honor in children’s literature. “*Surviving the Applewhites* was my funny book, and I’m so pleased that was the one that won,” Tolan said. “We’re in dire need of humor—to be able to look at the world around us and find



something fundamentally positive. The characters in this book have passion about what they do. They're a family that truly loves each other, even if they squabble — who care and cooperate and work together. We need to see that, maybe more than ever."



Books for Younger Readers

Tolan also exercised her sense of humor to create her best-known works for intermediate readers. The "Great Skinner" series includes four books published between 1983 and 1988. Like many of Tolan's young adult novels, each book focuses on a social issue. But these books are lighter in tone in order to appeal to a younger audience. In *The Great Skinner Strike*, for example, a mother's refusal to do housework leads to a focus on women's rights. This story was adapted for television and aired as an *ABC After School Special* called "Mom's on Strike" in 1988. *The Great Skinner Enterprise* concerns the struggles of running a

family business, while *The Great Skinner Getaway* tells about the not-so-glamorous side of traveling across small-town America in a motor home.

In her 1993 middle-grade novel *Save Halloween!* Tolan introduces the Filkin family. Johnna Filkin, the young daughter of an evangelist minister, shares her father's strong religious beliefs but does not always share his contempt for secular (non-religious) celebrations. For example, her father forbids her from celebrating Halloween, which he refers to as "the devil's holiday." When Johnna is selected to write a Halloween play for her sixth-grade class, however, she decides that the time has come for her to think for herself. "Thoughtful, pithy, and entertaining, this will intrigue readers from cover to cover," wrote *Booklist* reviewer Carolyn Phelan. Tolan continued the story of the Filkin family in *Ordinary Miracles* (1999).

Tolan has also written a few books for children. In *Marcy Hooper and the Greatest Treasure in the World*, published in 1991, young Marcy escapes her troubles at school in the hills near her home. Her encounters with dragons and nymphs give her the courage to face her school problems. In *Sophie and the Sidewalk Man*, published in 1992, a little girl saves her money to buy a stuffed hedgehog, since her mother's allergies prohibit her from getting a real pet. But when she sees a homeless man sharing his food with a stray cat, she learns an important lesson about generosity. Tolan's most recently published book, *Bartholomew's Blessing* (2003), features a mouse that travels to Bethlehem with an angel and a fox to be blessed by the Christ Child.

Writing about Gifted Children

In addition to writing fiction for children and young adults, Tolan is the co-author of an acclaimed book for adults called *Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Source for Parents and Teachers*. "I got involved in the whole subject of very bright kids because I had a child who was very different from other kids — so different that nobody at his school knew what to do with him," she explained. "As I tried to figure out how to get his really intense learning needs met, I discovered important truths about myself and my whole family. I began to realize how much hostility there is in the world toward unusually intelligent people, and how much harm is done to children who are forced to try to make themselves be like others when they really aren't, and it became a crusade."

Tolan started to realize that her son R.J. was intellectually gifted when he was around five years old. R.J. showed an amazing capacity for language at that age, and he also had impressive mathematical abilities. "It wasn't until I was doing a poetry workshop for fourth and fifth graders when [R.J.] was in kindergarten, and I realized I had to keep stopping to explain the language I was using, and I never had to do that with my son," she recalled. "And I began to suspect that there was something strange going on. So when [my husband and I] had him tested, and the psychologist said 'This is the brightest kid I've ever tested in my life,' we were completely terrified."

Despite his high intelligence, R.J. had trouble in school. He was often bored and restless in class, and he struggled to think in a conventional, linear way. "I used to say my son functioned like a short circuit because he was sparking all the time," Tolan stated. "It's web thinking, it's connected thinking. You take two steps down a path and you see a junction, and you may end up very far from where you intended. And it may be a wonderful place to be, but it isn't what you intended, and if you're in an environment like a school that says you must attend to these things, in this order, then a highly creative, a highly gifted person is going to have difficulty with that."

Guiding the Gifted Child

A Practical Source
for Parents and Teachers



Over 100,000
copies sold

James T. Webb, Ph.D.
Elizabeth A. Meckstroth, M.S.W.
and
Stephanie S. Tolan, M.A.

Tolan spent many years investigating educational opportunities for her son and working with other gifted children. In the process, she learned that both she and her husband had exceptionally high intelligence. This knowledge helped explain some of the problems they each experienced during their school years. Tolan's research also taught her about the most effective ways of handling gifted kids and helping them reach their potential. She in-

corporated this information into her 1982 book *Guiding the Gifted Child*, which she co-wrote with James T. Webb and Elizabeth Meckstroth. Since then, Tolan has written numerous articles and made many public appearances as an advocate for gifted children.

Today Tolan is a nationally recognized authority on gifted education. She understands that many gifted children feel different from their peers and place pressure upon themselves to succeed. She encourages these children—and all children—to accept themselves. "Most of the world is busy trying to tell children that they aren't good enough, aren't enough like other children, aren't really worthy of being loved," she stated. "What every kid needs to know is that she is just exactly the person she is meant to be, and that—no matter what—she is absolutely and unconditionally worthy of love. If I could help even one boy or girl to begin to really believe that, I'd feel as if I'd done what I was meant to do."

“

“Most of the world is busy trying to tell children that they aren't good enough, aren't enough like other children, aren't really worthy of being loved. What every kid needs to know is that she is just exactly the person she is meant to be, and that—no matter what—she is absolutely and unconditionally worthy of love. If I could help even one boy or girl to begin to really believe that, I'd feel as if I'd done what I was meant to do.”

”

Tolan continues to work toward this goal in her writing. She enjoys writing for young people because it gives her an opportunity to influence the next generation. But she admits that children can be a very tough audience. "People are always asking [children's authors] when we're going to start writing for adults, as though we're sort of 'trying out' on kids," she acknowledged. "Well, kids are the toughest readers in the world. They don't have to go to cocktail parties and pretend they've read some hot new book. If they don't want to read it, they'll just put it down. You'd better make it interesting."

Tolan believes that her audience can handle important real-life issues, so she tends to write about whatever topic interests her. "I can't spend a year of my life on a book unless it has a philosophical issue that I am deeply interested in," she explained. "Thus, I think all of my books have such backbones. Each one has an intense psychological, emotional, or philosophical question. It must have that for me to deal with it for the length of time it takes to write a book."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Stephanie Stein married Robert W. Tolan, the managing director of a professional theater, on December 19, 1964. She thus became a stepmother to her husband's sons, Patrick, Andrew, and Robert Jr. In 1972 the Tolans had a son together, whom they named R.J.

Tolan and her family moved around a lot due to her husband's theatrical career. They moved to a house on a lake near Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1999. Now that their sons are grown, Tolan and her husband share their home with several dogs, cats, and other pets.

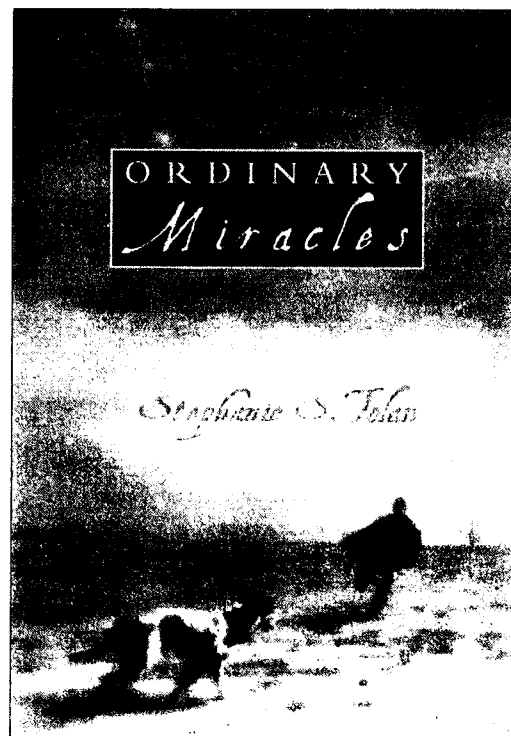
SELECTED WRITINGS

Young Adult Novels

- The Last of Eden*, 1980
- The Liberation of Tansy Warner*, 1980
- No Safe Harbors*, 1981
- Pride of the Peacock*, 1986
- A Good Courage*, 1988
- Plague Year*, 1990
- The Witch of Maple Park*, 1992
- Who's There?* 1994
- Welcome to the Ark*, 1996
- The Face in the Mirror*, 1998
- Flight of the Raven*, 2001
- Surviving the Appplewhites*, 2002

Middle-Grade Novels

- Grandpa — and Me*, 1978
- A Time to Fly Free*, 1983
- Save Halloween!* 1993
- Ordinary Miracles*, 1999



The “Great Skinner” Series

The Great Skinner Strike, 1983
The Great Skinner Enterprise, 1987
The Great Skinner Getaway, 1987
The Great Skinner Homestead, 1988

Children’s Books

Marcy Hooper and the Greatest Treasure in the World, 1991
Sophie and the Sidewalk Man, 1992
Bartholomew’s Blessing, 2003

Plays

The Ledge, 1968
Not I, Said the Little Red Hen, 1971
Bridge to Terabithia, 1990 (with Katherine Paterson, music by Steven Liebman)
The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks, 1998 (with Paterson, music by Leibman)
The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck, 2002 (with Paterson)

Nonfiction

Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Source for Parents and Teachers, 1982
(with James T. Webb and Elizabeth Meckstroth)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Notable Trade Book (National Council of Social Studies): 1978, for
Grandpa — and Me; 1980, for *The Liberation of Tansy Warner*
Bread Loaf Writer’s Conference Fellowship: 1981
American Psychological Association Media Award: 1983, for *Guiding the Gifted Child*
Best Book Award (*School Library Journal*): 1988, for *A Good Courage*

FURTHER READING

Books

Authors and Artists for Young Adults, Vol. 45, 2002
Hipple, Ted. *Writers for Young Adults*, 2000
Holtze, Sally Holmes, ed. *Sixth Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators*, 1989
Something about the Author, Vol. 78, 1994

Periodicals

Book Report, Jan. 1993, p.35

Charlotte (N.C.) Observer, Feb. 9, 2003, p.A1

Online Articles

<http://www.talentdevelop.com>

(*Talent Development*, "Stephanie Tolan Interview," undated)

Online Databases

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, articles from *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, 2002, and *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2003

ADDRESS

Stephanie S. Tolan
Random House Children's Books
1745 Broadway
10th Floor
New York, NY 10019

WORLD WIDE WEB SITE

<http://www.stephanietolan.com>

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How to Use the Cumulative Index

Our indexes have a new look. In an effort to make our indexes easier to use, we've combined the Name and General Index into a new, Cumulative Index. This single ready-reference resource covers all the volumes in *Biography Today*, both the general series and the special subject series. The new Cumulative Index contains complete listings of all individuals who have appeared in *Biography Today* since the series began. Their names appear in bold-faced type, followed by the issue in which they appear. The Cumulative Index also includes references for the occupations, nationalities, and ethnic and minority origins of individuals profiled in *Biography Today*.

We have also made some changes to our specialty indexes, the Places of Birth Index and the Birthday Index. To consolidate and to save space, the Places of Birth Index and the Birthday Index will no longer appear in the January and April issues of the softbound subscription series. But these indexes can still be found in the September issue of the softbound subscription series, in the hardbound Annual Cumulation at the end of each year, and in each volume of the special subject series.

General Series

The General Series of *Biography Today* is denoted in the index with the month and year of the issue in which the individual appeared. Each individual also appears in the Annual Cumulation for that year.

bin Laden, Osama Apr 02
Bush, George W. Sep 00; Update 00;
Update 01; Update 02
Clarkson, Kelly Jan 03
Eminem Apr 03
Fuller, Millard Apr 03
Giuliani, Rudolph Sep 02
Hartnett, Josh Sep 03
Lewis, John Jan 03
Roberts, Julia Sep 01
Rowling, J.K. Sep 99; Update 00;
Update 01; Update 02
Spears, Britney Jan 01
Tucker, Chris Jan 01
Wood, Elijah Apr 02

Special Subject Series

The Special Subject Series of *Biography Today* are each denoted in the index with an abbreviated form of the series name, plus the number of the volume in which the individual appears. They are listed as follows.

Adams, Ansel	Artist V.1	(Artists)
GrandPré, Mary	Author V.14	(Authors)
Jackson, Peter	PerfArt V.2	(Performing Artists)
Kapell, Dave	Science V.8	(Scientists & Inventors)
Kidd, Jason	Sport V.9	(Sports)
Peterson, Roger Tory	WorLdr V.1	(World Leaders: Environmental Leaders)
Sadat, Anwar	WorLdr V.2	(World Leaders: Modern African Leaders)
Wolf, Hazel	WorLdr V.3	(World Leaders: Environmental Leaders 2)

Updates

Updated information on selected individuals appears in the Appendix at the end of the *Biography Today* Annual Cumulation. In the index, the original entry is listed first, followed by any updates.

Arafat, Yasir	Sep 94; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update 98; Update 00; Update 01; Update 02
Gates, Bill	Apr 93; Update 98; Update 00; Science V.5; Update 01
Griffith Joyner, Florence	Sport V.1; Update 98
Sanders, Barry	Sep 95; Update 99
Spock, Dr. Benjamin	Sep 95; Update 98
Yeltsin, Boris	Apr 92; Update 93; Update 95; Update 96; Update 98; Update 00

Cumulative Index

This cumulative index includes names, occupations, nationalities, and ethnic and minority origins that pertain to all individuals profiled in *Biography Today* since the debut of the series in 1992.

- Aaliyah** Jan 02
Aaron, Hank Sport V.1
Abbey, Edward WorLdr V.1
Abdul, Paula Jan 92; Update 02
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem Sport V.1
Aboriginal
 Freeman, Cathy Jan 01
Abzug, Bella Sep 98
activists
 Abzug, Bella Sep 98
 Arafat, Yasir Sep 94; Update 94;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
 98; Update 00; Update 01; Update 02
 Ashe, Arthur Sep 93
 Askins, Renee WorLdr V.1
 Aung San Suu Kyi Apr 96; Update 98;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Banda, Hastings Kamuzu WorLdr V.2
 Bates, Daisy Apr 00
 Brower, David WorLdr V.1; Update 01
 Burnside, Aubyn Sep 02
 Calderone, Mary S. Science V.3
 Chavez, Cesar Sep 93
 Chavis, Benjamin Jan 94; Update 94
 Cronin, John WorLdr V.3
 Dai Qing WorLdr V.3
 Dalai Lama Sep 98
 Douglas, Marjory Stoneman .. WorLdr V.1;
 Update 98
 Edelman, Marian Wright Apr 93
 Foreman, Dave WorLdr V.1
 Fuller, Millard Apr 03
 Gibbs, Lois WorLdr V.1
 Haddock, Doris (Granny D) Sep 00
 Huerta, Dolores Sep 03
 Jackson, Jesse Sep 95; Update 01
 Ka Hsaw Wa WorLdr V.3
 Kaunda, Kenneth WorLdr V.2
 Kenyatta, Jomo WorLdr V.2
 Kielburger, Craig Jan 00
 Kim Dae-jung Sep 01
 LaDuke, Winona .. WorLdr V.3; Update 00
 Lewis, John Jan 03
 Love, Susan Science V.3
 Maathai, Wangari WorLdr V.1
 Mandela, Nelson Jan 92; Update 94;
 Update 01
 Mandela, Winnie WorLdr V.2
 Mankiller, Wilma Apr 94
 Martin, Bernard WorLdr V.3
 Masih, Iqbal Jan 96
 Menchu, Rigoberta Jan 93
 Mendes, Chico WorLdr V.1
 Mugabe, Robert WorLdr V.2
 Marshall, Thurgood Jan 92; Update 93
 Nakamura, Leanne Apr 02
 Nkrumah, Kwame WorLdr V.2
 Nyerere, Julius Kambarage ... WorLdr V.2;
 Update 99
 Oliver, Patsy Ruth WorLdr V.1
 Parks, Rosa Apr 92; Update 94
 Pauling, Linus Jan 95
 Saro-Wiwa, Ken WorLdr V.1
 Savimbi, Jonas WorLdr V.2
 Spock, Benjamin Sep 95; Update 98
 Steinem, Gloria Oct 92
 Teresa, Mother Apr 98
 Watson, Paul WorLdr V.1
 Werbach, Adam WorLdr V.1
 Wolf, Hazel WorLdr V.3
 Zamora, Pedro Apr 95
actors/actresses
 Aaliyah Jan 02
 Affleck, Ben Sep 99
 Alba, Jessica Sep 01
 Allen, Tim Apr 94; Update 99
 Alley, Kirstie Jul 92
 Anderson, Gillian Jan 97
 Aniston, Jennifer Apr 99
 Arnold, Roseanne Oct 92
 Banks, Tyra PerfArt V.2

- Barrymore, Drew Jan 01
 Bergen, Candice Sep 93
 Berry, Halle Jan 95; Update 02
 Bialik, Mayim Jan 94
 Blanchard, Rachel Apr 97
 Bledel, Alexis Jan 03
 Brandis, Jonathan Sep 95
 Brandy Apr 96
 Bryan, Zachery Ty Jan 97
 Burke, Chris Sep 93
 Bynes, Amanda Sep 03
 Cameron, Candace Apr 95
 Campbell, Neve Apr 98
 Candy, John Sep 94
 Carrey, Jim Apr 96
 Carvey, Dana Jan 93
 Chan, Jackie PerfArt V.1
 Culkin, Macaulay Sep 93
 Danes, Claire Sep 97
 DiCaprio, Leonardo Apr 98
 Diesel, Vin Jan 03
 Doherty, Shannen Apr 92; Update 94
 Duchovny, David Apr 96
 Duff, Hilary Sep 02
 Dunst, Kirsten PerfArt V.1
 Eminem Apr 03
 Ford, Harrison Sep 97
 Garth, Jennie Apr 96
 Gellar, Sarah Michelle Jan 99
 Gilbert, Sara Apr 93
 Goldberg, Whoopi Apr 94
 Goodman, John Sep 95
 Hanks, Tom Jan 96
 Hart, Melissa Joan Jan 94
 Hartnett, Josh Sep 03
 Hewitt, Jennifer Love Sep 00
 Holmes, Katie Jan 00
 Jones, James Earl Jan 95
 Lee, Spike Apr 92
 Locklear, Heather Jan 95
 López, George PerfArt V.2
 Lopez, Jennifer Jan 02
 Mac, Bernie PerfArt V.1
 Muniz, Frankie Jan 01
 Murphy, Eddie PerfArt V.2
 O'Donnell, Rosie Apr 97; Update 02
 Oleynik, Larisa Sep 96
 Olsen, Ashley Sep 95
 Olsen, Mary Kate Sep 95
 Perry, Luke Jan 92
 Phoenix, River Apr 94
 Pitt, Brad Sep 98
 Portman, Natalie Sep 99
 Priestley, Jason Apr 92
 Prinze, Freddie, Jr. Apr 00
 Radcliffe, Daniel Jan 02
 Reeve, Christopher Jan 97; Update 02
 Roberts, Julia Sep 01
 Ryder, Winona Jan 93
 Shatner, William Apr 95
 Sinatra, Frank Jan 99
 Smith, Will Sep 94
 Stewart, Patrick Jan 94
 Stiles, Julia PerfArt V.2
 Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber Jan 96
 Thomas, Jonathan Taylor Apr 95
 Tucker, Chris Jan 01
 Usher PerfArt V.1
 Vidal, Christina PerfArt V.1
 Washington, Denzel Jan 93; Update 02
 Watson, Barry Sep 02
 Watson, Emma Apr 03
 Wayans, Keenen Ivory Jan 93
 White, Jaleel Jan 96
 Williams, Robin Apr 92
 Wilson, Mara Jan 97
 Winfrey, Oprah Apr 92; Update 00
 Winslet, Kate Sep 98
 Witherspoon, Reese Apr 03
 Wood, Elijah Apr 02
Adams, Ansel Artist V.1
Adams, Yolanda Apr 03
Affleck, Ben Sep 99
African-Americans
 see blacks
Agassi, Andre Jul 92
Aguilera, Christina Apr 00
Aidid, Mohammed Farah WorLdr V.2
Aikman, Troy Apr 95; Update 01
Alba, Jessica Sep 01
Albanian
 Teresa, Mother Apr 98
Albright, Madeleine Apr 97
Alcindor, Lew
 see Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem Sport V.1
Alexander, Lloyd Author V.6
Algerian
 Boulmerka, Hassiba Sport V.1
Ali, Muhammad Sport V.2
Allen, Marcus Sep 97
Allen, Tim Apr 94; Update 99

- Allen, Tori** Sport V.9
Alley, Kirstie Jul 92
Almond, David Author V.10
Alvarez, Luis W. Science V.3
Amanpour, Christiane Jan 01
Amin, Idi WorLdr V.2
Amman, Simon Sport V.8
An Na Author V.12
Anders, C.J.
see Bennett, Cherie Author V.9
Anderson, Gillian Jan 97
Anderson, Laurie Halse Author V.11
Anderson, Marian Jan 94
Anderson, Terry Apr 92
Andretti, Mario Sep 94
Andrews, Ned. Sep 94
Angelou, Maya Apr 93
Angolan
 Savimbi, Jonas WorLdr V.2
animators
see also cartoonists
 Hillenburg, Stephen Author V.14
 Jones, Chuck Author V.12
 Lasseter, John Sep 00
 Tartakovsky, Genndy Author V.11
Aniston, Jennifer Apr 99
Annan, Kofi Jan 98; Update 01
Applegate, K. A. Jan 00
Arab-American
 Nye, Naomi Shihab Author V.8
Arafat, Yasir Sep 94; Update 94;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
 98; Update 00; Update 01; Update 02
Arantes do Nascimento, Edson
see Pelé Sport V.1
architects
 Juster, Norton Author V.14
 Lin, Maya Sep 97
 Pei, I.M. Artist V.1
 Wright, Frank Lloyd Artist V.1
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand . . Jan 95; Update 01
Armstrong, Lance Sep 00; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
Armstrong, Robb Author V.9
Armstrong, William H. Author V.7
Arnold, Roseanne Oct 92
artists
 Adams, Ansel Artist V.1
 Bearden, Romare Artist V.1
 Bennett, Olivia Sep 03
 Calder, Alexander Artist V.1
 Chagall, Marc Artist V.1
 Christo Sep 96
 Frankenthaler, Helen Artist V.1
 Gorey, Edward Author V.13
 GrandPré, Mary Author V.14
 Johns, Jasper Artist V.1
 Lawrence, Jacob Artist V.1; Update 01
 Lin, Maya Sep 97
 Moore, Henry Artist V.1
 Moses, Grandma Artist V.1
 Nechita, Alexandra Jan 98
 Nevelson, Louise Artist V.1
 O'Keeffe, Georgia Artist V.1
 Parks, Gordon Artist V.1
 Pinkney, Jerry Author V.2
 Ringgold, Faith Author V.2
 Rivera, Diego Artist V.1
 Rockwell, Norman Artist V.1
 Warhol, Andy Artist V.1
Ashanti PerfArt V.2
Ashe, Arthur Sep 93
Ashley, Maurice Sep 99
Asians
 An Na Author V.12
 Aung San Suu Kyi Apr 96; Update 98;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Chan, Jackie PerfArt V.1
 Chung, Connie Jan 94; Update 96
 Dai Qing WorLdr V.3
 Fu Mingxia Sport V.5
 Guey, Wendy Sep 96
 Ho, David Science V.6
 Ka Hsaw Wa WorLdr V.3
 Kim Dae-jung Sep 01
 Kwan, Michelle Sport V.3; Update 02
 Lee, Jeanette Apr 03
 Lin, Maya Sep 97
 Ma, Yo-Yo Jul 92
 Ohno, Apolo Sport V.8
 Pak, Se Ri Sport V.4
 Park, Linda Sue Author V.12
 Pei, I.M. Artist V.1
 Tan, Amy Author V.9
 Wang, An Science V.2
 Woods, Tiger Sport V.1; Update 00
 Yamaguchi, Kristi Apr 92
 Yao Ming Sep 03
 Yep, Laurence Author V.5
Asimov, Isaac Jul 92
Askins, Renee WorLdr V.1
astronauts
 Collins, Eileen Science V.4

Glenn, John Jan 99
 Harris, Bernard Science V.3
 Jemison, Mae Oct 92
 Lovell, Jim Jan 96
 Lucid, Shannon Science V.2
 Ochoa, Ellen Apr 01; Update 02
 Ride, Sally Jan 92

athletes

see sports

Attenborough, David Science V.4
Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia Author V.8
Aung San Suu Kyi Apr 96; Update 98;
 Update 01; Update 02

Australians

Beachley, Layne Sport V.9
 Freeman, Cathy Jan 01
 Irwin, Steve Science V.7
 Norman, Greg Jan 94
 Travers, P.L. Author V.2
 Webb, Karrie Sport V.5; Update 01;
 Update 02

authors

Abbey, Edward WorLdr V.1
 Alexander, Lloyd Author V.6
 Almond, David Author V.10
 An Na Author V.12
 Anderson Laurie Halse Author V.11
 Angelou, Maya Apr 93
 Applegate, K. A. Jan 00
 Armstrong, Robb Author V.9
 Armstrong, William H. Author V.7
 Asimov, Isaac Jul 92
 Attenborough, David Science V.4
 Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia Author V.8
 Avi Jan 93
 Baldwin, James Author V.2
 Bauer, Joan Author V.10
 Bennett, Cherie Author V.9
 Benson, Mildred Jan 03
 Berenstain, Jan Author V.2
 Berenstain, Stan Author V.2
 Blum, Deborah Science V.8
 Blume, Judy Jan 92
 Boyd, Candy Dawson Author V.3
 Bradbury, Ray Author V.3
 Brody, Jane Science V.2
 Brooks, Gwendolyn Author V.3
 Brower, David WorLdr V.1; Update 01
 Brown, Claude Author V.12
 Byars, Betsy Author V.4
 Cabot, Meg Author V.12

Caplan, Arthur Science V.6
 Card, Orson Scott Author V.14
 Carle, Eric Author V.1
 Carson, Rachel WorLdr V.1
 Childress, Alice Author V.1
 Cleary, Beverly Apr 94
 Clements, Andrew Author V.13
 Colfer, Eoin Author V.13
 Collier, Bryan Author V.11
 Cooney, Barbara Author V.8
 Cooney, Caroline B. Author V.4
 Cormier, Robert Author V.1; Update 01
 Cosby, Bill Jan 92
 Coville, Bruce Author V.9
 Creech, Sharon Author V.5
 Crichton, Michael Author V.5
 Cronin, John WorLdr V.3
 Curtis, Christopher Paul Author V.4;
 Update 00
 Cushman, Karen Author V.5
 Dahl, Roald Author V.1
 Dai Qing WorLdr V.3
 Danziger, Paula Author V.6
 Delany, Bessie Sep 99
 Delany, Sadie Sep 99
 dePaola, Tomie Author V.5
 DiCamillo, Kate Author V.10
 Douglas, Marjory Stoneman WorLdr V.1;
 Update 98
 Dove, Rita Jan 94
 Draper, Sharon Apr 99
 Dunbar, Paul Lawrence Author V.8
 Duncan, Lois Sep 93
 Ellison, Ralph Author V.3
 Farmer, Nancy Author V.6
 Filipovic, Zlata Sep 94
 Fitzhugh, Louise Author V.3
 Flake, Sharon Author V.13
 Frank, Anne Author V.4
 Freedman, Russell Author V.14
 Gantos, Jack Author V.10
 Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. Apr 00
 George, Jean Craighead Author V.3
 Giff, Patricia Reilly Author V.7
 Gorey, Edward Author V.13
 Gould, Stephen Jay Science V.2;
 Update 02
 Grandin, Temple Science V.3
 Greenburg, Dan Author V.14
 Grimes, Nikki Author V.14
 Grisham, John Author V.1

- Guy, Rosa Author V.9
 Gwaltney, John Langston Science V.3
 Haddix, Margaret Peterson Author V.11
 Haley, Alex Apr 92
 Hamilton, Virginia Author V.1;
 Author V.12
 Handford, Martin Jan 92
 Hansberry, Lorraine Author V.5
 Heinlein, Robert Author V.4
 Henry, Marguerite Author V.4
 Herriot, James Author V.1
 Hesse, Karen Author V.5; Update 02
 Hillenbrand, Laura Author V.14
 Hinton, S.E. Author V.1
 Hughes, Langston Author V.7
 Hurston, Zora Neale Author V.6
 Jackson, Shirley Author V.6
 Jacques, Brian Author V.5
 Jiménez, Francisco Author V.13
 Johnson, Angela Author V.6
 Juster, Norton Author V.14
 Kamler, Kenneth Science V.6
 Kerr, M.E. Author V.1
 King, Stephen Author V.1; Update 00
 Konigsburg, E. L. Author V.3
 Krakauer, Jon Author V.6
 LaDuke, Winona WorLdr V.3; Update 00
 Lee, Harper Author V.9
 Lee, Stan Author V.7; Update 02
 Le Guin, Ursula K. Author V.8
 L'Engle, Madeleine Jan 92; Apr 01
 Leopold, Aldo WorLdr V.3
 Lester, Julius Author V.7
 Lewis, C. S. Author V.3
 Lindgren, Astrid Author V.13
 Lionni, Leo Author V.6
 Lipsyte, Robert Author V.12
 Love, Susan Science V.3
 Lowry, Lois Author V.4
 Lynch, Chris Author V.13
 Macaulay, David Author V.2
 MacLachlan, Patricia Author V.2
 Martin, Ann M. Jan 92
 McCully, Emily Arnold Jul 92; Update 93
 McDaniel, Lurlene Author V.14
 McKissack, Fredrick L. Author V.3
 McKissack, Patricia C. Author V.3
 Mead, Margaret Science V.2
 Meltzer, Milton Author V.11
 Morrison, Lillian Author V.12
 Morrison, Toni Jan 94
 Moss, Cynthia WorLdr V.3
 Mowat, Farley Author V.8
 Muir, John WorLdr V.3
 Murie, Margaret WorLdr V.1
 Murie, Olaus J. WorLdr V.1
 Myers, Walter Dean Jan 93; Update 94
 Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds Apr 93
 Nelson, Marilyn Author V.13
 Nielsen, Jerri Science V.7
 Nixon, Joan Lowery Author V.1
 Nye, Naomi Shihab Author V.8
 O'Dell, Scott Author V.2
 Opdyke, Irene Gut Author V.9
 Park, Linda Sue Author V.12
 Pascal, Francine Author V.6
 Paterson, Katherine Author V.3
 Paulsen, Gary Author V.1
 Peck, Richard Author V.10
 Peet, Bill Author V.4
 Peterson, Roger Tory WorLdr V.1
 Pierce, Tamora Author V.13
 Pike, Christopher Sep 96
 Pinkney, Andrea Davis Author V.10
 Pinkwater, Daniel Author V.8
 Pinsky, Robert Author V.7
 Potter, Beatrix Author V.8
 Prelutsky, Jack Author V.2
 Pullman, Philip Author V.9
 Reid Banks, Lynne Author V.2
 Rennison, Louise Author V.10
 Rice, Anne Author V.3
 Rinaldi, Ann Author V.8
 Ringgold, Faith Author V.2
 Rowan, Carl Sep 01
 Rowling, J. K. Sep 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Ryan, Pam Muñoz Author V.12
 Rylant, Cynthia Author V.1
 Sachar, Louis Author V.6
 Sacks, Oliver Science V.3
 Salinger, J.D. Author V.2
 Saro-Wiwa, Ken WorLdr V.1
 Scarry, Richard Sep 94
 Scieszka, Jon Author V.9
 Sendak, Maurice Author V.2
 Senghor, Léopold Sédar WorLdr V.2
 Seuss, Dr. Jan 92
 Silverstein, Shel Author V.3; Update 99
 Sleator, William Author V.11
 Small, David Author V.10
 Snicket, Lemony Author V.12

CUMULATIVE INDEX

- Sones, Sonya Author V.11
 Soto, Gary Author V.5
 Speare, Elizabeth George Sep 95
 Spinelli, Jerry Apr 93
 Spock, Benjamin Sep 95; Update 98
 Stepanek, Mattie Apr 02
 Stine, R.L. Apr 94
 Strasser, Todd Author V.7
 Tan, Amy Author V.9
 Tarbox, Katie Author V.10
 Taylor, Mildred D. Author V.1; Update 02
 Thomas, Lewis Apr 94
 Tolan, Stephanie S. Author V.14
 Tolkien, J.R.R. Jan 02
 Travers, P.L. Author V.2
 Van Allsburg, Chris Apr 92
 Van Draanen, Wendelin Author V.11
 Voigt, Cynthia Oct 92
 Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. Author V.1
 White, E.B. Author V.1
 White, Ruth Author V.11
 Wilder, Laura Ingalls Author V.3
 Williams, Garth Author V.2
 Williamson, Kevin Author V.6
 Wilson, August Author V.4
 Wilson, Edward O. Science V.8
 Wolff, Virginia Euwer Author V.13
 Woodson, Jacqueline Author V.7;
 Update 01
 Wrede, Patricia C. Author V.7
 Wright, Richard Author V.5
 Yep, Laurence Author V.5
 Yolen, Jane Author V.7
 Zindel, Paul Author V.1; Update 02
- autobiographies**
 Handford, Martin Jan 92
 Iacocca, Lee Jan 92
 L'Engle, Madeleine Jan 92
 Parkinson, Jennifer Apr 95
- Avi** Jan 93
- Babbitt, Bruce** Jan 94
- Backstreet Boys** Jan 00
- Bahrke, Shannon** Sport V.8
- Bailey, Donovan** Sport V.2
- Baiul, Oksana** Apr 95
- Baker, James** Oct 92
- Baldwin, James** Author V.2
- Ballard, Robert** Science V.4
- ballet**
see dance
- Banda, Hastings Kamuzu** WorLdr V.2
- Banks, Tyra** PerfArt V.2
- Bardeen, John** Science V.1
- Barkley, Charles** Apr 92; Update 02
- Barr, Roseanne**
see Arnold, Roseanne Oct 92
- Barrymore, Drew** Jan 01
- Barton, Hazel** Science V.6
- baseball**
 Aaron, Hank Sport V.1
 Bonds, Barry Jan 03
 Fielder, Cecil Sep 93
 Griffey, Ken, Jr. Sport V.1
 Hernandez, Livan Apr 98
 Jackson, Bo Jan 92; Update 93
 Jeter, Derek Sport V.4
 Johnson, Randy Sport V.9
 Jordan, Michael Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 99; Update
 01
 Maddux, Greg Sport V.3
 Mantle, Mickey Jan 96
 Martinez, Pedro Sport V.5
 McGwire, Mark Jan 99; Update 99
 Ripken, Cal, Jr. Sport V.1; Update 01
 Robinson, Jackie Sport V.3
 Rodriguez, Alex Sport V.6
 Rose, Pete Jan 92
 Ryan, Nolan Oct 92; Update 93
 Sanders, Deion Sport V.1
 Sosa, Sammy Jan 99; Update 99
 Williams, Ted Sport V.9
 Winfield, Dave Jan 93
- basketball**
 Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem Sport V.1
 Barkley, Charles Apr 92; Update 02
 Bird, Larry Jan 92; Update 98
 Bird, Sue Sport V.9
 Bryant, Kobe Apr 99
 Carter, Vince Sport V.5; Update 01
 Chamberlain, Wilt Sport V.4
 Dumars, Joe Sport V.3; Update 99
 Ewing, Patrick Jan 95; Update 02
 Garnett, Kevin Sport V.6
 Hardaway, Anfernee "Penny" Sport V.2
 Hill, Grant Sport V.1
 Holdsclaw, Chamique Sep 00
 Iverson, Allen Sport V.7
 Johnson, Magic Apr 92; Update 02
 Jordan, Michael Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 99; Update
 01

- Kidd, Jason Sport V.9
 Lobo, Rebecca Sport V.3
 Olajuwon, Hakeem Sep 95
 O'Neal, Shaquille Sep 93
 Pippen, Scottie Oct 92
 Robinson, David Sep 96
 Rodman, Dennis Apr 96; Update 99
 Stiles, Jackie Sport V.6
 Stockton, John Sport V.3
 Summitt, Pat Sport V.3
 Swoopes, Sheryl Sport V.2
 Ward, Charlie Apr 94
 Yao Ming Sep 03
- Bass, Lance**
see *N Sync Jan 01
- Bates, Daisy** Apr 00
- Battle, Kathleen** Jan 93
- Bauer, Joan** Author V.10
- Beachley, Layne** Sport V.9
- Bearden, Romare** Artist V.1
- beauty pageants**
 Lopez, Charlotte Apr 94
 Whitestone, Heather Apr 95; Update 02
- Bennett, Cherie** Author V.9
- Bennett, Olivia** Sep 03
- Benson, Mildred** Jan 03
- Berenstain, Jan** Author V.2
- Berenstain, Stan** Author V.2
- Bergen, Candice** Sep 93
- Berners-Lee, Tim** Science V.7
- Berry, Halle** Jan 95; Update 02
- Bethe, Hans A.** Science V.3
- Bezos, Jeff** Apr 01
- Bhutto, Benazir** Apr 95; Update 99;
 Update 02
- Bialik, Mayim** Jan 94
- bicycle riding**
 Armstrong, Lance Sep 00; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Dunlap, Alison Sport V.7
 LeMond, Greg Sport V.1
 Mirra, Dave Sep 02
- billiards**
 Lee, Jeanette Apr 03
- bin Laden, Osama** Apr 02
- Bird, Larry** Jan 92; Update 98
- Bird, Sue** Sport V.9
- Blackmun, Harry** Jan 00
- blacks**
 Aaliyah Jan 02
 Aaron, Hank Sport V.1
- Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem Sport V.1
 Adams, Yolanda Apr 03
 Aidid, Mohammed Farah WorLdr V.2
 Ali, Muhammad Sport V.2
 Allen, Marcus Sep 97
 Amin, Idi WorLdr V.2
 Anderson, Marian Jan 94
 Angelou, Maya Apr 93
 Annan, Kofi Jan 98; Update 01
 Aristide, Jean-Bertrand Jan 95; Update 01
 Armstrong, Robb Author V.9
 Ashanti PerfArt V.2
 Ashe, Arthur Sep 93
 Ashley, Maurice Sep 99
 Bailey, Donovan Sport V.2
 Baldwin, James Author V.2
 Banda, Hastings Kamuzu WorLdr V.2
 Banks, Tyra PerfArt V.2
 Bates, Daisy Apr 00
 Battle, Kathleen Jan 93
 Bearden, Romare Artist V.1
 Berry, Halle Jan 95
 Blige, Mary J. Apr 02
 Bonds, Barry Jan 03
 Boyd, Candy Dawson Author V.3
 Boyz II Men Jan 96
 Bradley, Ed Apr 94
 Brandy Apr 96
 Brooks, Gwendolyn Author V.3
 Brooks, Vincent Sep 03
 Brown, Claude Author V.12
 Brown, Ron Sep 96
 Bryant, Kobe Apr 99
 Canady, Alexa Science V.6
 Carson, Ben Science V.4
 Carter, Vince Sport V.5; Update 01
 Chamberlain, Wilt Sport V.4
 Champagne, Larry III Apr 96
 Chavis, Benjamin Jan 94; Update 94
 Childress, Alice Author V.1
 Collier, Bryan Author V.11
 Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy) Apr 98
 Coolio Sep 96
 Cosby, Bill Jan 92
 Curtis, Christopher Paul Author V.4;
 Update 00
 Dayne, Ron Apr 00
 Delany, Bessie Sep 99
 Delany, Sadie Sep 99
 Destiny's Child Apr 01
 Devers, Gail Sport V.2

- Dove, Rita Jan 94
 Draper, Sharon Apr 99
 Dumars, Joe. Sport V.3; Update 99
 Dunbar, Paul Lawrence Author V.8
 Edelman, Marian Wright Apr 93
 Ellison, Ralph. Author V.3
 Ewing, Patrick Jan 95; Update 02
 Farrakhan, Louis Jan 97
 Fielder, Cecil Sep 93
 Fitzgerald, Ella Jan 97
 Flake, Sharon. Author V.13
 Flowers, Vonetta. Sport V.8
 Franklin, Aretha Apr 01
 Freeman, Cathy Jan 01
 Garnett, Kevin Sport V.6
 Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. Apr 00
 Gayle, Helene Science V.8
 George, Eddie. Sport V.6
 Gillespie, Dizzy. Apr 93
 Glover, Savion. Apr 99
 Goldberg, Whoopi Apr 94
 Griffey, Ken, Jr. Sport V.1
 Grimes, Nikki Author V.14
 Gumbel, Bryant. Apr 97
 Guy, Jasmine Sep 93
 Guy, Rosa Author V.9
 Gwaltney, John Langston Science V.3
 Haley, Alex Apr 92
 Hamilton, Virginia Author V.1;
 Author V.12
 Hammer Jan 92
 Hansberry, Lorraine Author V.5
 Hardaway, Anfernee "Penny" Sport V.2
 Harris, Bernard Science V.3
 Hernandez, Livan. Apr 98
 Hill, Anita Jan 93
 Hill, Grant Sport V.1
 Hill, Lauryn. Sep 99
 Holdsclaw, Chamique. Sep 00
 Houston, Whitney Sep 94
 Hughes, Langston. Author V.7
 Hunter-Gault, Charlayne Jan 00
 Hurston, Zora Neale. Author V.6
 Ice-T Apr 93
 Iverson, Allen Sport V.7
 Jackson, Bo Jan 92; Update 93
 Jackson, Jesse. Sep 95; Update 01
 Jackson, Shirley Ann Science V.2
 Jamison, Judith. Jan 96
 Jemison, Mae. Oct 92
 Jeter, Derek Sport V.4
 Johnson, Angela Author V.6
 Johnson, John. Jan 97
 Johnson, Lonnie Science V.4
 Johnson, Magic Apr 92; Update 02
 Johnson, Michael. Jan 97; Update 00
 Jones, James Earl Jan 95
 Jones, Marion Sport V.5
 Jones, Quincy PerfArt V.2
 Jordan, Barbara Apr 96
 Jordan, Michael. Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 99; Update
 01
 Joyner-Kersee, Jackie. Oct 92; Update
 96; Update 97; Update 98
 Kaunda, Kenneth WorLdr V.2
 Kenyatta, Jomo WorLdr V.2
 Kidd, Jason Sport V.9
 Lawrence, Jacob Artist V.1; Update 01
 Lee, Spike Apr 92
 Lester, Julius Author V.7
 Lewis, Carl. Sep 96; Update 97
 Lewis, John. Jan 03
 Maathai, Wangari WorLdr V.1
 Mac, Bernie PerfArt V.1
 Mandela, Nelson. Jan 92; Update 94;
 Update 01
 Mandela, Winnie WorLdr V.2
 Marsalis, Wynton Apr 92
 Marshall, Thurgood Jan 92; Update 93
 Martinez, Pedro Sport V.5
 Maxwell, Jody-Anne Sep 98
 McCarty, Oseola. Jan 99; Update 99
 McGruder, Aaron Author V.10
 McKissack, Fredrick L. Author V.3
 McKissack, Patricia C. Author V.3
 McNabb, Donovan. Apr 03
 Mobutu Sese Seko WorLdr V.2;
 Update 97
 Morgan, Garrett Science V.2
 Morrison, Sam Sep 97
 Morrison, Toni. Jan 94
 Moss, Randy Sport V.4
 Mugabe, Robert WorLdr V.2
 Murphy, Eddie. PerfArt V.2
 Myers, Walter Dean. Jan 93; Update 94
 Ndeti, Cosmas. Sep 95
 Nelly. Sep 03
 Nelson, Marilyn. Author V.13
 Nkrumah, Kwame WorLdr V.2

- Nyerere, Julius Kambage . . . WorLdr V.2;
Update 99
- Olajuwon, Hakeem Sep 95
- Oliver, Patsy Ruth WorLdr V.1
- O'Neal, Shaquille Sep 93
- Parks, Gordon Artist V.1
- Parks, Rosa Apr 92; Update 94
- Payton, Walter Jan 00
- Pelé Sport V.1
- Pinkney, Andrea Davis Author V.10
- Pinkney, Jerry Author V.2
- Pippen, Scottie Oct 92
- Powell, Colin Jan 92; Update 93;
Update 95; Update 01
- Queen Latifah Apr 92
- Rice, Condoleezza Apr 02
- Rice, Jerry Apr 93
- Ringgold, Faith Author V.2
- Roba, Fatuma Sport V.3
- Robinson, David Sep 96
- Robinson, Jackie Sport V.3
- Rodman, Dennis Apr 96; Update 99
- Rowan, Carl Sep 01
- Rudolph, Wilma Apr 95
- Salt 'N' Pepa Apr 95
- Sanders, Barry Sep 95; Update 99
- Sanders, Deion Sport V.1
- Sapp, Warren Sport V.5
- Saro-Wiwa, Ken WorLdr V.1
- Satcher, David Sep 98
- Savimbi, Jonas WorLdr V.2
- Schwikert, Tasha Sport V.7
- Scurry, Briana Jan 00
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar WorLdr V.2
- Shabazz, Betty Apr 98
- Shakur, Tupac Apr 97
- Simmons, Ruth Sep 02
- Smith, Emmitt Sep 94
- Smith, Will Sep 94
- Sosa, Sammy Jan 99; Update 99
- Stanford, John Sep 99
- Stewart, Kordell Sep 98
- Swoopes, Sheryl Sport V.2
- Tarvin, Herbert Apr 97
- Taylor, Mildred D. Author V.1; Update 02
- Thomas, Clarence Jan 92
- Tubman, William V. S. WorLdr V.2
- Tucker, Chris Jan 01
- Usher PerfArt V.1
- Vick, Michael Sport V.9
- Ward, Charlie Apr 94
- Ward, Lloyd D. Jan 01
- Washington, Denzel Jan 93; Update 02
- Wayans, Keenen Ivory Jan 93
- White, Jaleel Jan 96
- White, Reggie Jan 98
- WilderBrathwaite, Gloria Science V.7
- Williams, Serena Sport V.4; Update 00;
Update 02
- Williams, Venus Jan 99; Update 00;
Update 01; Update 02
- Willingham, Tyrone Sep 02
- Wilson, August Author V.4
- Winans, CeCe Apr 00
- Winfield, Dave Jan 93
- Winfrey, Oprah Apr 92; Update 00
- Woods, Tiger Sport V.1; Update 00;
Sport V.6
- Woodson, Jacqueline Author V.7;
Update 01
- Wright, Richard Author V.5
- Blair, Bonnie** Apr 94; Update 95
- Blanchard, Rachel** Apr 97
- Bledel, Alexis** Jan 03
- Blige, Mary J.** Apr 02
- Blum, Deborah** Science V.8
- Blume, Judy** Jan 92
- BMX**
see bicycle riding
- bobsledding**
Flowers, Vonetta Sport V.8
- Bonds, Barry** Jan 03
- Bosnian**
Filipovic, Zlata Sep 94
- Boulmerka, Hassiba** Sport V.1
- Bourke-White, Margaret** Artist V.1
- Boutros-Ghali, Boutros** Apr 93;
Update 98
- boxing**
Ali, Muhammad Sport V.2
- Boyd, Candy Dawson** Author V.3
- Boyz II Men** Jan 96
- Bradbury, Ray** Author V.3
- Bradley, Ed** Apr 94
- Brady, Tom** Sport V.7
- Brandis, Jonathan** Sep 95
- Brandy** Apr 96
- Brazilians**
da Silva, Fabiola Sport V.9
Mendes, Chico WorLdr V.1
Pelé Sport V.1
- Breathed, Berke** Jan 92

- Brody, Jane** Science V.2
Brooks, Garth Oct 92
Brooks, Gwendolyn Author V.3
Brooks, Vincent Sep 03
Brower, David WorLdr V.1; Update 01
Brown, Claude Author V.12
Brown, Ron Sep 96
Brundtland, Gro Harlem Science V.3
Bryan, Zachery Ty Jan 97
Bryant, Kobe Apr 99
Bulgarian
 Christo Sep 96
Burger, Warren Sep 95
Burke, Chris Sep 93
Burmese
 Aung San Suu Kyi Apr 96; Update 98;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Ka Hsaw Wa WorLdr V.3
Burns, Ken Jan 95
Burnside, Aubyn Sep 02
Burrell, Stanley Kirk
see Hammer Jan 92
Bush, Barbara Jan 92
Bush, George Jan 92
Bush, George W. Sep 00; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
Bush, Laura Apr 03
business
 Bezos, Jeff. Apr 01
 Brown, Ron Sep 96
 Case, Steve Science V.5
 Chavez, Julz Sep 02
 Cheney, Dick Jan 02
 Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy) Apr 98
 Diemer, Walter Apr 98
 Fields, Debbi. Jan 96
 Fiorina, Carly Sep 01; Update 01;
 Update 02
 Fox, Vicente Apr 03
 Fuller, Millard Apr 03
 Gates, Bill Apr 93; Update 98;
 Update 00; Science V.5; Update 01
 Groppe, Laura. Science V.5
 Handler, Ruth Apr 98; Update 02
 Iacocca, Lee A. Jan 92
 Jobs, Steven Jan 92; Science V.5
 Johnson, John. Jan 97
 Johnson, Lonnie Science V.4
 Kapell, Dave Science V.8
 Kurzweil, Raymond Science V.2
 Land, Edwin Science V.1
 Mars, Forrest Sr. Science V.4
 Mohajer, Dineh Jan 02
 Morgan, Garrett Science V.2
 Morita, Akio Science V.4
 Perot, H. Ross Apr 92; Update 93
 Romero, John Science V.8
 Stachowski, Richie Science V.3
 Swanson, Janese Science V.4
 Thomas, Dave Apr 96; Update 02
 Tompkins, Douglas WorLdr V.3
 Wang, An Science V.2
 Ward, Lloyd D. Jan 01
 Whitman, Meg Sep 03
Butcher, Susan Sport V.1
Byars, Betsy Author V.4
Bynes, Amanda Sep 03
Cabot, Meg Author V.12
Caldecott Medal
 Cooney, Barbara Author V.8
 Macauley, David Author V.2
 McCully, Emily Arnold. Jul 92; Update 93
 Myers, Walter Dean. Jan 93; Update 94
 Sendak, Maurice Author V.2
 Small, David. Author V.10
 Van Allsburg, Chris Apr 92
Calder, Alexander Artist V.1
Calderone, Mary S. Science V.3
Cameron, Candace Apr 95
Campbell, Neve Apr 98
Canadians
 Bailey, Donovan Sport V.2
 Blanchard, Rachel Apr 97
 Campbell, Neve Apr 98
 Candy, John. Sep 94
 Carrey, Jim. Apr 96
 Dion, Celine Sep 97
 Galdikas, Biruté. Science V.4
 Gretzky, Wayne Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 99
 Howe, Gordie Sport V.2
 Jennings, Peter Jul 92
 Johnston, Lynn Jan 99
 Kielburger, Craig Jan 00
 lang, k.d. Sep 93
 Lavigne, Avril PerfArt V.2
 Lemieux, Mario. Jul 92; Update 93
 Martin, Bernard WorLdr V.3
 Messier, Mark Apr 96
 Morissette, Alanis Apr 97
 Mowat, Farley Author V.8

- Priestley, Jason Apr 92
 Roy, Patrick Sport V.7
 Sakic, Joe Sport V.6
 Shatner, William Apr 95
 Twain, Shania Apr 99
 Vernon, Mike Jan 98; Update 02
 Watson, Paul WorLdr V.1
 Wolf, Hazel WorLdr V.3
 Yzerman, Steve Sport V.2
Canady, Alexa Science V.6
Candy, John Sep 94
Caplan, Arthur Science V.6
Capriati, Jennifer Sport V.6
car racing
 Andretti, Mario Sep 94
 Earnhardt, Dale Apr 01
 Gordon, Jeff Apr 99
 Muldowney, Shirley Sport V.7
 Petty, Richard Sport V.2
 Stewart, Tony Sport V.9
Card, Orson Scott Author V.14
Carey, Mariah Apr 96
Carle, Eric Author V.1
Carmona, Richard Science V.8
Carpenter, Mary Chapin Sep 94
Carrey, Jim Apr 96
Carson, Ben Science V.4
Carson, Rachel WorLdr V.1
Carter, Aaron Sep 02
Carter, Chris Author V.4
Carter, Jimmy Apr 95; Update 02
Carter, Nick
see Backstreet Boys Jan 00
Carter, Vince Sport V.5; Update 01
cartoonists
see also animators
 Armstrong, Robb Author V.9
 Breathed, Berke Jan 92
 Davis, Jim Author V.1
 Groening, Matt Jan 92
 Guisewite, Cathy Sep 93
 Hillenburg, Stephen Author V.14
 Johnston, Lynn Jan 99
 Jones, Chuck Author V.12
 Larson, Gary Author V.1
 Lee, Stan Author V.7; Update 02
 McGruder, Aaron Author V.10
 Schulz, Charles Author V.2; Update 00
 Tartakovsky, Genndy Author V.11
 Watterson, Bill Jan 92
Carvey, Dana Jan 93
Case, Steve Science V.5
Castro, Fidel Jul 92; Update 94
Chagall, Marc Artist V.1
Chamberlain, Wilt Sport V.4
Champagne, Larry III Apr 96
Chan, Jackie PerfArt V.1
Chan Kwong Sang
see Chan, Jackie PerfArt V.1
Chasez, JC
see *N Sync Jan 01
Chastain, Brandi Sport V.4; Update 00
Chavez, Cesar Sep 93
Chavez, Julz Sep 02
Chavis, Benjamin Jan 94; Update 94
Cheney, Dick Jan 02
chess
 Ashley, Maurice Sep 99
Childress, Alice Author V.1
Chinese
 Chan, Jackie PerfArt V.1
 Dai Qing WorLdr V.3
 Fu Mingxia Sport V.5
 Pei, I.M. Artist V.1
 Wang, An Science V.2
 Yao Ming Sep 03
choreography
see dance
Christo Sep 96
Chung, Connie Jan 94; Update 95;
 Update 96
Cisneros, Henry Sep 93
civil rights movement
 Chavis, Benjamin Jan 94; Update 94
 Edelman, Marian Wright Apr 93
 Jackson, Jesse Sep 95; Update 01
 Lewis, John Jan 03
 Marshall, Thurgood Jan 92; Update 93
 Parks, Rosa Apr 92
 Shabazz, Betty Apr 98
Clark, Kelly Sport V.8
Clarkson, Kelly Jan 03
Clay, Cassius Marcellus, Jr.
see Ali, Muhammad Sport V.2
Cleary, Beverly Apr 94
Clements, Andrew Author V.13
Clinton, Bill Jul 92; Update 94;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update 98;
 Update 99; Update 00; Update 01
Clinton, Chelsea Apr 96; Update 97;
 Update 01

- Clinton, Hillary Rodham** Apr 93;
Update 94; Update 95; Update 96; Update
99; Update 00; Update 01
- Cobain, Kurt** Sep 94
- Cohen, Adam Ezra** Apr 97
- Colfer, Eoin** Author V.13
- Collier, Bryan** Author V.11
- Collins, Eileen** Science V.4
- Collins, Francis** Science V.6
- Columbian**
Ocampo, Adriana C. Science V.8
Shakira PerfArt V.1
- Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy)** Apr 98
- comedians**
Allen, Tim Apr 94; Update 99
Arnold, Roseanne Oct 92
Candy, John Sep 94
Carrey, Jim Apr 96
Carvey, Dana Jan 93
Cosby, Bill Jan 92
Goldberg, Whoopi Apr 94
Leno, Jay Jul 92
Letterman, David Jan 95
López, George PerfArt V.2
Mac, Bernie PerfArt V.1
Murphy, Eddie PerfArt V.2
O'Donnell, Rosie Apr 97; Update 02
Seinfeld, Jerry Oct 92; Update 98
Tucker, Chris Jan 01
Wayans, Keenen Ivory Jan 93
Williams, Robin Apr 92
- comic strips**
see cartoonists
- computers**
Berners-Lee, Tim Science V.7
Bezos, Jeff Apr 01
Case, Steve Science V.5
Cray, Seymour Science V.2
Engelbart, Douglas Science V.5
Fanning, Shawn . . . Science V.5; Update 02
Fiorina, Carly Sep 01; Update 01;
Update 02
Flannery, Sarah Science V.5
Gates, Bill Apr 93; Update 98;
Update 00; Science V.5; Update 01
Groppe, Laura Science V.5
Hopper, Grace Murray Science V.5
Jobs, Steven Jan 92; Science V.5
Kurzweil, Raymond Science V.2
Miller, Rand Science V.5
Miller, Robyn Science V.5
Miyamoto, Shigeru Science V.5
Perot, H. Ross Apr 92
Romero, John Science V.8
Wang, An Science V.2
Wozniak, Steve Science V.5
- Congress**
see representatives
see senators
- conservationists**
see environmentalists
- Coolio** Sep 96
- Cooney, Barbara** Author V.8
- Cooney, Caroline B.** Author V.4
- Córdoba, France** Science V.7
- Cormier, Robert** Author V.1; Update 01
- Cosby, Bill** Jan 92
- Cousteau, Jacques** Jan 93; Update 97
- Coville, Bruce** Author V.9
- Crawford, Cindy** Apr 93
- Cray, Seymour** Science V.2
- Creech, Sharon** Author V.5
- Crichton, Michael** Author V.5
- Cronin, John** WorLdr V.3
- Cubans**
Castro, Fidel Jul 92; Update 94
Estefan, Gloria Jul 92
Fuentes, Daisy Jan 94
Hernandez, Livan Apr 98
Zamora, Pedro Apr 95
- Culkin, Macaulay** Sep 93
- Curtis, Christopher Paul** Author V.4;
Update 00
- Cushman, Karen** Author V.5
- Czechoslovakians**
Hasek, Dominik Sport V.3
Hingis, Martina Sport V.2
Jagr, Jaromir Sport V.5
Navratilova, Martina Jan 93; Update 94
- da Silva, Fabiola** Sport V.9
- Dae-jung, Kim**
see Kim Dae-jung Sep 01
- Dahl, Roald** Author V.1
- Dai Qing** WorLdr V.3
- Dakides, Tara** Sport V.7
- Dalai Lama** Sep 98
- Daly, Carson** Apr 00
- dance**
Abdul, Paula Jan 92; Update 02
de Mille, Agnes Jan 95
Estefan, Gloria Jul 92

- Farrell, Suzanne PerfArt V.1
 Glover, Savion Apr 99
 Hammer Jan 92
 Jamison, Judith Jan 96
 Kistler, Darci Jan 93
 Nureyev, Rudolf Apr 93
Danes, Claire Sep 97
Daniel, Beth Sport V.1
Danziger, Paula Author V.6
da Silva, Fabiola Sport V.9
Davenport, Lindsay Sport V.5
Davis, Jim Author V.1
Dayne, Ron Apr 00
de Klerk, F.W. Apr 94; Update 94
Delany, Bessie Sep 99
Delany, Sadie Sep 99
de Mille, Agnes Jan 95
Democratic Party
 Brown, Ron Sep 96
 Carter, Jimmy Apr 95; Update 02
 Clinton, Bill Jul 92; Update 94;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
 98; Update 99; Update 00; Update 01
 Gore, Al Jan 93; Update 96; Update 97;
 Update 98; Update 99; Update 00; Update
 01
 Lewis, John Jan 03
dentist
 Delany, Bessie Sep 99
Denton, Sandi
 see Salt 'N' Pepa Apr 95
dePaola, Tomie Author V.5
Destiny's Child Apr 01
Devers, Gail Sport V.2
Diana, Princess of Wales Jul 92;
 Update 96; Update 97; Jan 98
DiCamillo, Kate Author V.10
DiCaprio, Leonardo Apr 98
Diemer, Walter Apr 98
Diesel, Vin Jan 03
Dion, Celine Sep 97
diplomats
 Albright, Madeleine Apr 97
 Annan, Kofi Jan 98; Update 01
 Boutros-Ghali, Boutros Apr 93;
 Update 98
 Rowan, Carl Sep 01
directors
 Burns, Ken Jan 95
 Carter, Chris Author V.4
 Chan, Jackie PerfArt V.1
 Crichton, Michael Author V.5
 Farrell, Suzanne PerfArt V.1
 Jackson, Peter PerfArt V.2
 Jones, Chuck Author V.12
 Lasseter, John Sep 00
 Lee, Spike Oct 92
 Lucas, George Apr 97; Update 02
 Parks, Gordon Artist V.1
 Spielberg, Steven Jan 94; Update 94;
 Update 95
 Taymor, Julie PerfArt V.1
 Warhol, Andy Artist V.1
 Wayans, Keenen Ivory Jan 93
 Whedon, Joss Author V.9
 Williamson, Kevin Author V.6
disabled
 Burke, Chris Sep 93
 Dole, Bob Jan 96
 Driscoll, Jean Sep 97
 Grandin, Temple Science V.3
 Gwaltney, John Langston Science V.3
 Hawking, Stephen Apr 92
 Hillenbrand, Laura Author V.14
 Parkinson, Jennifer Apr 95
 Perlman, Itzhak Jan 95
 Reeve, Christopher Jan 97; Update 02
 Runyan, Marla Apr 02
 Stepanek, Mattie Apr 02
 Whitestone, Heather Apr 95; Update 02
diving
 Fu Mingxia Sport V.5
Dixie Chicks PerfArt V.1
doctors
 Brundtland, Gro Harlem Science V.3
 Calderone, Mary S. Science V.3
 Canady, Alexa Science V.6
 Carmona, Richard Science V.8
 Carson, Ben Science V.4
 Collins, Francis Science V.6
 Fauci, Anthony S. Science V.7
 Gayle, Helene Science V.8
 Harris, Bernard Science V.3
 Healy, Bernadine Science V.1; Update 01
 Heimlich, Henry Science V.6
 Ho, David Science V.6
 Jemison, Mae Oct 92
 Kamler, Kenneth Science V.6
 Love, Susan Science V.3
 Nielsen, Jerri Science V.7
 Novello, Antonia Apr 92
 Pippig, Uta Sport V.1

Richardson, Dot Sport V.2; Update 00
 Sabin, Albert Science V.1
 Sacks, Oliver Science V.3
 Salk, Jonas Jan 94; Update 95
 Satcher, David Sep 98
 Spelman, Lucy Science V.6
 Spock, Benjamin Sep 95; Update 98
 WilderBrathwaite, Gloria Science V.7
Doherty, Shannen Apr 92; Update 94
Dole, Bob Jan 96; Update 96
Dole, Elizabeth Jul 92; Update 96;
 Update 99
Domingo, Placido Sep 95
Dominicans
 Martinez, Pedro Sport V.5
 Sosa, Sammy Jan 99; Update 99
Dorough, Howie
see Backstreet Boys Jan 00
Douglas, Marjory Stoneman WorLdr V.1;
 Update 98
Dove, Rita Jan 94
Dragila, Stacy Sport V.6
Draper, Sharon Apr 99
Driscoll, Jean Sep 97
Duchovny, David Apr 96
Duff, Hilary Sep 02
Duke, David Apr 92
Dumars, Joe Sport V.3; Update 99
Dumitriu, Ioana Science V.3
Dunbar, Paul Lawrence Author V.8
Duncan, Lois Sep 93
Dunlap, Alison Sport V.7
Dunst, Kirsten PerfArt V.1
Dutch
 Lionni, Leo Author V.6
Earle, Sylvia Science V.1
Earnhardt, Dale Apr 01
Edelman, Marian Wright Apr 93
educators
 Armstrong, William H. Author V.7
 Calderone, Mary S. Science V.3
 Córdova, France Science V.7
 Delany, Sadie Sep 99
 Draper, Sharon Apr 99
 Forman, Michele Jan 03
 Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. Apr 00
 Giff, Patricia Reilly Author V.7
 Jiménez, Francisco Author V.13
 Simmons, Ruth Sep 02
 Stanford, John Sep 99
 Suzuki, Shinichi Sep 98

Egyptians
 Boutros-Ghali, Boutros Apr 93;
 Update 98
 Sadat, Anwar WorLdr V.2
Elion, Getrude Science V.6
Ellerbee, Linda Apr 94
Ellison, Ralph Author V.3
Elway, John Sport V.2; Update 99
Eminem Apr 03
Engelbart, Douglas Science V.5
English
 Almond, David Author V.10
 Amanpour, Christiane Jan 01
 Attenborough, David Science V.4
 Barton, Hazel Science V.6
 Berners-Lee, Tim Science V.7
 Dahl, Roald Author V.1
 Diana, Princess of Wales Jul 92;
 Update 96; Update 97; Jan 98
 Goodall, Jane Science V.1; Update 02
 Handford, Martin Jan 92
 Hargreaves, Alison Jan 96
 Hawking, Stephen Apr 92
 Herriot, James Author V.1
 Jacques, Brian Author V.5
 Leakey, Louis Science V.1
 Leakey, Mary Science V.1
 Lewis, C. S. Author V.3
 Macaulay, David Author V.2
 Moore, Henry Artist V.1
 Potter, Beatrix Author V.8
 Pullman, Philip Author V.9
 Radcliffe, Daniel Jan 02
 Reid Banks, Lynne Author V.2
 Rennison, Louise Author V.10
 Rowling, J. K. Sep 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Sacks, Oliver Science V.3
 Stewart, Patrick Jan 94
 Tolkien, J.R.R. Jan 02
 Watson, Emma Apr 03
 Winslet, Kate Sep 98
environmentalists
 Abbey, Edward WorLdr V.1
 Adams, Ansel Artist V.1
 Askins, Renee WorLdr V.1
 Babbitt, Bruce Jan 94
 Brower, David WorLdr V.1; Update 01
 Brundtland, Gro Harlem Science V.3
 Carson, Rachel WorLdr V.1
 Cousteau, Jacques Jan 93

- Cronin, John WorLdr V.3
 Dai Qing WorLdr V.3
 Douglas, Marjory Stoneman . . . WorLdr V.1;
 Update 98
 Earle, Sylvia Science V.1
 Foreman, Dave WorLdr V.1
 Gibbs, Lois WorLdr V.1
 Irwin, Steve Science V.7
 Ka Hsaw Wa WorLdr V.3
 LaDuke, Winona . . . WorLdr V.3; Update 00
 Leopold, Aldo WorLdr V.3
 Maathai, Wangari WorLdr V.1
 Martin, Bernard WorLdr V.3
 Mendes, Chico WorLdr V.1
 Mittermeier, Russell A. WorLdr V.1
 Moss, Cynthia WorLdr V.3
 Mowat, Farley Author V.8
 Muir, John WorLdr V.3
 Murie, Margaret WorLdr V.1
 Murie, Olaus J. WorLdr V.1
 Nakamura, Leanne Apr 02
 Nelson, Gaylord WorLdr V.3
 Oliver, Patsy Ruth WorLdr V.1
 Patrick, Ruth Science V.3
 Peterson, Roger Tory WorLdr V.1
 Saro-Wiwa, Ken WorLdr V.1
 Tompkins, Douglas WorLdr V.3
 Watson, Paul WorLdr V.1
 Werbach, Adam WorLdr V.1
 Wolf, Hazel WorLdr V.3
Erdős, Paul Science V.2
Estefan, Gloria Jul 92
Ethiopians
 Haile Selassie WorLdr V.2
 Roba, Fatuma Sport V.3
Evans, Janet Jan 95; Update 96
Evert, Chris Sport V.1
Ewing, Patrick Jan 95; Update 02
Fanning, Shawn Science V.5; Update 02
Farmer, Nancy Author V.6
Farrakhan, Louis Jan 97
Farrell, Suzanne PerfArt V.1
Fatone, Joey
see *N Sync Jan 01
Fauci, Anthony S. Science V.7
Favre, Brett Sport V.2
Fedorov, Sergei Apr 94; Update 94
Fernandez, Lisa Sport V.5
Ficker, Roberta Sue
see Farrell, Suzanne PerfArt V.1
Fielder, Cecil Sep 93
Fields, Debbi Jan 96
Filipovic, Zlata Sep 94
film critic
 Siskel, Gene Sep 99
Fiorina, Carly Sep 01; Update 01;
 Update 02
First Ladies of the United States
 Bush, Barbara Jan 92
 Bush, Laura Apr 03
 Clinton, Hillary Rodham Apr 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 96; Update
 99; Update 00; Update 01
fishing
 Yelas, Jay Sport V.9
Fitzgerald, Ella Jan 97
Fitzhugh, Louise Author V.3
Flake, Sharon Author V.13
Flannery, Sarah Science V.5
Flowers, Vonetta Sport V.8
football
 Aikman, Troy Apr 95; Update 01
 Allen, Marcus Sep 97
 Brady, Tom Sport V.7
 Dayne, Ron Apr 00
 Elway, John Sport V.2; Update 99
 Favre, Brett Sport V.2
 George, Eddie Sport V.6
 Griese, Brian Jan 02
 Harbaugh, Jim Sport V.3
 Jackson, Bo Jan 92; Update 93
 Johnson, Jimmy Jan 98
 Madden, John Sep 97
 Manning, Peyton Sep 00
 Marino, Dan Apr 93; Update 00
 McNabb, Donovan Apr 03
 Montana, Joe Jan 95; Update 95
 Moss, Randy Sport V.4
 Payton, Walter Jan 00
 Rice, Jerry Apr 93
 Sanders, Barry Sep 95; Update 99
 Sanders, Deion Sport V.1
 Sapp, Warren Sport V.5
 Shula, Don Apr 96
 Smith, Emmitt Sep 94
 Stewart, Kordell Sep 98
 Vick, Michael Sport V.9
 Ward, Charlie Apr 94
 Warner, Kurt Sport V.4
 Weinke, Chris Apr 01
 White, Reggie Jan 98

- Willingham, Tyrone Sep 02
 Young, Steve Jan 94; Update 00
- Ford, Harrison** Sep 97
- Foreman, Dave** WorLdr V.1
- Forman, Michele** Jan 03
- Fossey, Dian** Science V.1
- Fox, Vicente** Apr 03
- Frank, Anne** Author V.4
- Frankenthaler, Helen** Artist V.1
- Franklin, Aretha** Apr 01
- Freedman, Russell** Author V.14
- Freeman, Cathy** Jan 01
- French**
 Cousteau, Jacques Jan 93; Update 97
 Marceau, Marcel PerfArt V.2
- Fresh Prince**
see Smith, Will Sep 94
- Fu Mingxia** Sport V.5
- Fuentes, Daisy** Jan 94
- Fuller, Millard** Apr 03
- Galdikas, Biruté** Science V.4
- Galeczka, Chris** Apr 96
- Gantos, Jack** Author V.10
- Garcia, Jerry** Jan 96
- Garcia, Sergio** Sport V.7
- Garnett, Kevin** Sport V.6
- Garth, Jennie** Apr 96
- Gates, Bill** Apr 93; Update 98;
 Update 00; Science V.5; Update 01
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr.** Apr 00
- Gayle, Helene** Science V.8
- Geisel, Theodor Seuss**
see Seuss, Dr. Jan 92
- Gellar, Sarah Michelle** Jan 99
- Geography Bee, National**
 Galeczka, Chris Apr 96
- George, Eddie** Sport V.6
- George, Jean Craighead** Author V.3
- Germans**
 Bethe, Hans A. Science V.3
 Frank, Anne Author V.4
 Graf, Steffi Jan 92; Update 01
 Otto, Sylke Sport V.8
 Pippig, Uta Sport V.1
- Ghanaians**
 Annan, Kofi Jan 98; Update 01
 Nkrumah, Kwame WorLdr V.2
- Gibbs, Lois** WorLdr V.1
- Giff, Patricia Reilly** Author V.7
- Gilbert, Sara** Apr 93
- Gilbert, Walter** Science V.2
- Gillespie, Dizzy** Apr 93
- Gilman, Billy** Apr 02
- Gingrich, Newt** Apr 95; Update 99
- Ginsburg, Ruth Bader** Jan 94
- Giuliani, Rudolph** Sep 02
- Glenn, John** Jan 99
- Glover, Savion** Apr 99
- Goldberg, Whoopi** Apr 94
- golf**
 Daniel, Beth Sport V.1
 Garcia, Sergio Sport V.7
 Nicklaus, Jack Sport V.2
 Norman, Greg Jan 94
 Pak, Se Ri Sport V.4
 Sorenstam, Annika Sport V.6
 Webb, Karrie Sport V.5; Update 01;
 Update 02
 Woods, Tiger Sport V.1; Update 00;
 Sport V.6
- Goodall, Jane** Science V.1; Update 02
- Goodman, John** Sep 95
- Gorbachev, Mikhail** Jan 92; Update 96
- Gordon, Jeff** Apr 99
- Gore, Al** Jan 93; Update 96;
 Update 97; Update 98; Update 99; Update 00;
 Update 01
- Gorey, Edward** Author V.13
- Gould, Stephen Jay** Science V.2;
 Update 02
- governors**
 Babbitt, Bruce Jan 94
 Bush, George W. Sep 00; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Carter, Jimmy Apr 95; Update 02
 Clinton, Bill Jul 92; Update 94;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
 98; Update 99; Update 00; Update 01
 Nelson, Gaylor WorLdr V.3
 Ventura, Jesse Apr 99; Update 02
- Graf, Steffi** Jan 92; Update 01
- Granato, Cammi** Sport V.8
- Grandin, Temple** Science V.3
- GrandPré, Mary** Author V.14
- Granny D**
see Haddock, Doris. Sep 00
- Grant, Amy** Jan 95
- Greenburg, Dan** Author V.14
- Gretzky, Wayne** Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 99
- Griese, Brian** Jan 02

- Griffey, Ken, Jr.** Sport V.1
Griffith Joyner, Florence Sport V.1;
 Update 98
Grimes, Nikki Author V.14
Grisham, John Author V.1
Groening, Matt Jan 92
Groppe, Laura Science V.5
Guatemalan
 Menchu, Rigoberta Jan 93
Guey, Wendy Sep 96
Guisewite, Cathy Sep 93
Gumbel, Bryant Apr 97
Guy, Jasmine Sep 93
Guy, Rosa Author V.9
Gwaltney, John Langston Science V.3
Gyatso, Tenzin
see Dalai Lama Sep 98
gymnastics
 Miller, Shannon Sep 94; Update 96
 Moceanu, Dominique Jan 98
 Schwikert, Tasha Sport V.7
 Zmeskal, Kim Jan 94
Haddix, Margaret Peterson Author V.11
Haddock, Doris Sep 00
Haile Selassie WorLdr V.2
Haitian
 Aristide, Jean-Bertrand Jan 95; Update 01
Haley, Alex Apr 92
Hamilton, Virginia Author V.1;
 Author V.12
Hamm, Mia Sport V.2; Update 00
Hammer Jan 92
Hampton, David Apr 99
Handford, Martin Jan 92
Handler, Daniel
see Snicket, Lemony Author V.12
Handler, Ruth Apr 98; Update 02
Hanks, Tom Jan 96
Hansberry, Lorraine Author V.5
Hanson Jan 98
Hanson, Ike
see Hanson Jan 98
Hanson, Taylor
see Hanson Jan 98
Hanson, Zac
see Hanson Jan 98
Harbaugh, Jim Sport V.3
Hardaway, Anfernee "Penny" Sport V.2
Harding, Tonya Sep 94
Hargreaves, Alison Jan 96
Harris, Bernard Science V.3
Hart, Melissa Joan Jan 94
Hartnett, Josh Sep 03
Hasek, Dominik Sport V.3
Hassan II WorLdr V.2; Update 99
Haughton, Aaliyah Dana
see Aaliyah Jan 02
Hawk, Tony Apr 01
Hawking, Stephen Apr 92
Haynes, Cornell, Jr.
see Nelly Sep 03
Healy, Bernadine Science V.1; Update 01
Heimlich, Henry Science V.6
Heinlein, Robert Author V.4
Hendrickson, Sue Science V.7
Henry, Marguerite Author V.4
Hernandez, Livan Apr 98
Herriot, James Author V.1
Hesse, Karen Author V.5; Update 02
Hewitt, Jennifer Love Sep 00
Hill, Anita Jan 93
Hill, Faith Sep 01
Hill, Grant Sport V.1
Hill, Lauryn Sep 99
Hillary, Sir Edmund Sep 96
Hillenbrand, Laura Author V.14
Hillenburg, Stephen Author V.14
Hingis, Martina Sport V.2
Hinton, S.E. Author V.1
Hispanics
 Aguilera, Christina Apr 00
 Alba, Jessica Sep 01
 Alvarez, Luis W. Science V.3
 Bledel, Alexis Jan 03
 Carmona, Richard Science V.8
 Castro, Fidel Jul 92; Update 94
 Chavez, Cesar Sep 93
 Chavez, Julz Sep 02
 Cisneros, Henry Sep 93
 Córdova, France Science V.7
 Domingo, Placido Sep 95
 Estefan, Gloria Jul 92
 Fernandez, Lisa Sport V.5
 Fox, Vicente Apr 03
 Fuentes, Daisy Jan 94
 Garcia, Sergio Sport V.7
 Hernandez, Livan Sep 93
 Huerta, Dolores Sep 03
 Iglesias, Enrique Jan 03
 Jiménez, Francisco Author V.13
 Lopez, Charlotte Apr 94
 Lopez, Jennifer Jan 02

- López, George PerfArt V.2
 Martin, Ricky Jan 00
 Martinez, Pedro Sport V.5
 Mendes, Chico WorLdr V.1
 Muniz, Frankie Jan 01
 Novello, Antonia Apr 92
 Ocampo, Adriana C. Science V.8
 Ochoa, Ellen Apr 01; Update 02
 Ochoa, Severo Jan 94
 Pele Sport V.1
 Prinze, Freddie, Jr. Apr 00
 Rivera, Diego Artist V.1
 Rodriguez, Alex Sport V.6
 Rodriguez, Eloy Science V.2
 Ryan, Pam Muñoz Author V.12
 Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa Sport V.1
 Selena Jan 96
 Shakira PerfArt V.1
 Soto, Gary Author V.5
 Toro, Natalia Sep 99
 Vidal, Christina PerfArt V.1
 Villa-Komaroff, Lydia Science V.6
 Zamora, Pedro Apr 95
- Ho, David** Science V.6
- hockey**
 Fedorov, Sergei Apr 94; Update 94
 Granato, Cammi. Sport V.8
 Gretzky, Wayne Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 99
 Hasek, Dominik Sport V.3
 Howe, Gordie Sport V.2
 Jagr, Jaromir Sport V.5
 Lemieux, Mario Jul 92; Update 93
 Lidstrom, Nicklas Sep 03
 Messier, Mark Apr 96
 Roy, Patrick Sport V.7
 Sakic, Joe Sport V.6
 Vernon, Mike Jan 98; Update 02
 Yzerman, Steve Sport V.2
- Hogan, Hulk** Apr 92
- Holdscraw, Chamique** Sep 00
- Holmes, Katie** Jan 00
- Hooper, Geoff** Jan 94
- Hopper, Grace Murray** Science V.5
- Horner, Jack** Science V.1
- horse racing**
 Krone, Julie Jan 95; Update 00
- House of Representatives**
see representatives
- Houston, Whitney** Sep 94
- Howe, Gordie** Sport V.2
- Huerta, Dolores** Sep 03
- Hughes, Langston** Author V.7
- Hughes, Sarah** Jan 03
- Hungarians**
 Erdős, Paul Science V.2
 Seles, Monica Jan 96
- Hunter-Gault, Charlayne** Jan 00
- Hurston, Zora Neale** Author V.6
- Hussein, King** Apr 99
- Hussein, Saddam** Jul 92; Update 96;
 Update 01; Update 02
- Iacocca, Lee A.** Jan 92
- Ice-T** Apr 93
- Iglesias, Enrique** Jan 03
- illustrators**
 Berenstain, Jan. Author V.2
 Berenstain, Stan. Author V.2
 Carle, Eric Author V.1
 Collier, Bryan Author V.11
 Cooney, Barbara Author V.8
 dePaola, Tomie Author V.5
 Fitzhugh, Louise Author V.3
 George, Jean Craighead Author V.3
 Gorey, Edward. Author V.13
 GrandPré, Mary. Author V.14
 Handford, Martin Jan 92
 Konigsburg, E. L. Author V.3
 Lionni, Leo Author V.6
 Macaulay, David Author V.2
 McCully, Emily Arnold. Apr 92; Update 93
 Peet, Bill Author V.4
 Pinkney, Jerry Author V.2
 Pinkwater, Daniel Author V.8
 Potter, Beatrix Author V.8
 Ringgold, Faith Author V.2
 Rockwell, Norman Artist V.1
 Scarry, Richard Sep 94
 Sendak, Maurice Author V.2
 Seuss, Dr. Jan 92
 Silverstein, Shel Author V.3; Update 99
 Small, David. Author V.10
 Van Allsburg, Chris Apr 92
 Williams, Garth Author V.2
- in-line skating**
see skating (in-line) Sport V.9
- Internet**
 Berners-Lee, Tim Science V.7
 Bezos, Jeff. Apr 01
 Case, Steve Science V.5
 Fanning, Shawn Science V.5; Update 02
 Flannery, Sarah Science V.5

- Groppe, Laura Science V.5
 Tarbox, Katie Author V.10
 Whitman, Meg Sep 03
- inventors**
 Alvarez, Luis W. Science V.3
 Berners-Lee, Tim Science V.7
 Cousteau, Jacques Jan 93; Update 97
 Diemer, Walter Apr 98
 Engelbart, Douglas Science V.5
 Fanning, Shawn Science V.5; Update 02
 Grandin, Temple Science V.3
 Hampton, David Apr 99
 Handler, Ruth Apr 98; Update 02
 Heimlich, Henry Science V.6
 Johnson, Lonnie Science V.4
 Kapell, Dave Science V.8
 Kurzweil, Raymond Science V.2
 Land, Edwin Science V.1
 Lemelson, Jerome Science V.3
 Mars, Forrest Sr. Science V.4
 Morgan, Garrett Science V.2
 Ochoa, Ellen Apr 01; Update 02
 Patterson, Ryan Science V.7
 Stachowski, Richie Science V.3
 Swanson, Janese Science V.4
 Wang, An Science V.2
 Warrick, Earl Science V.8
 Wozniak, Steve Science V.5
- Iraqi**
 Hussein, Saddam Jul 92; Update 96;
 Update 01; Update 02
- Irish**
 Colfer, Eoin Author V.13
 Flannery, Sarah Science V.5
 Lewis, C. S. Author V.3
 Robinson, Mary Sep 93
- Irwin, Steve** Science V.7
- Israelis**
 Perlman, Itzhak Jan 95
 Portman, Natalie Sep 99
 Rabin, Yitzhak Oct 92; Update 93;
 Update 94; Update 95
- Italians**
 Andretti, Mario Sep 94
 Krim, Mathilde Science V.1
 Levi-Montalcini, Rita Science V.1
- Iverson, Allen** Sport V.7
- Ivey, Artis, Jr.**
see Coolio Sep 96
- Jackson, Bo** Jan 92; Update 93
Jackson, Jesse Sep 95; Update 01
- Jackson, Peter** PerfArt V.2
Jackson, Shirley Author V.6
Jackson, Shirley Ann Science V.2
Jacques, Brian Author V.5
Jagr, Jaromir Sport V.5
- Jamaicans**
 Ashley, Maurice Sep 99
 Bailey, Donovan Sport V.2
 Denton, Sandi
see Salt 'N' Pepa Apr 95
 Ewing, Patrick Jan 95; Update 02
 Maxwell, Jody-Anne Sep 98
- James, Cheryl**
see Salt 'N' Pepa Apr 95
- Jamison, Judith** Jan 96
- Jansen, Dan** Apr 94
- Japanese**
 Miyamoto, Shigeru Science V.5
 Morita, Akio Science V.4
 Suzuki, Shinichi Sep 98
 Uchida, Mitsuko Apr 99
- Javacheff, Christo V.**
see Christo Sep 96
- Jemison, Mae** Oct 92
- Jennings, Peter** Jul 92
- Jeter, Derek** Sport V.4
- Jewel** Sep 98
- Jiménez, Francisco** Author V.13
- Jobs, Steven** Jan 92; Science V.5
- jockey**
 Krone, Julie Jan 95; Update 00
- John Paul II** Oct 92; Update 94;
 Update 95
- Johns, Jasper** Artist V.1
- Johnson, Angela** Author V.6
- Johnson, Jimmy** Jan 98
- Johnson, Johanna** Apr 00
- Johnson, John** Jan 97
- Johnson, Lonnie** Science V.4
- Johnson, Magic** Apr 92; Update 02
- Johnson, Michael** Jan 97; Update 00
- Johnson, Randy** Sport V.9
- Johnston, Lynn** Jan 99
- Jones, Chuck** Author V.12
- Jones, James Earl** Jan 95
- Jones, Marion** Sport V.5
- Jones, Norah** PerfArt V.2
- Jones, Quincy** PerfArt V.2
- Jordan, Barbara** Apr 96
- Jordan, Michael** Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 99; Update
 01

Jordanian

Hussein, King Apr 99

journalists

Amanpour, Christiane Jan 01

Anderson, Terry Apr 92

Benson, Mildred Jan 03

Blum, Deborah Science V.8

Bradley, Ed. Apr 94

Brody, Jane Science V.2

Chung, Connie Jan 94; Update 95;
Update 96

Dai Qing WorLdr V.3

Ellerbe, Linda Apr 94

Hunter-Gault, Charlayne Jan 00

Jennings, Peter Jul 92

Krakauer, Jon Author V.6

Lipsyte, Robert Author V.12

Pauley, Jane Oct 92

Roberts, Cokie Apr 95

Rowan, Carl Sep 01

Soren, Tabitha Jan 97

Steinem, Gloria Oct 92

Walters, Barbara Sep 94

Joyner-Kersee, Jackie Oct 92; Update
96; Update 97; Update 98

Jung, Kim Dae

see Kim Dae-jung Sep 01

Juster, Norton Author V.14

Ka Hsaw Wa WorLdr V.3

Kaddafi, Muammar

see Qaddafi, Muammar Apr 97

Kamler, Kenneth Science V.6

Kapell, Dave Science V.8

Kaunda, Kenneth WorLdr V.2

Keene, Carolyne

see Benson, Mildred Jan 03

Kenyans

Kenyatta, Jomo WorLdr V.2

Maathai, Wangari WorLdr V.1

Ndeti, Cosmas Sep 95

Kenyatta, Jomo WorLdr V.2

Kerr, M.E. Author V.1

Kerrigan, Nancy Apr 94

Kidd, Jason Sport V.9

Kielburger, Craig Jan 00

Kilcher, Jewel

see Jewel Sep 98

Kim Dae-jung Sep 01

King, Stephen Author V.1; Update 00

Kiraly, Karch Sport V.4

Kirkpatrick, Chris

see *N Sync Jan 01

Kistler, Darci Jan 93

Klug, Chris Sport V.8

Knowles, Beyoncé

see Destiny's Child Apr 01

Konigsburg, E. L. Author V.3

Korean

An Na Author V.12

Kim Dae-jung Sep 01

Pak, Se Ri Sport V.4

Krakauer, Jon Author V.6

Krim, Mathilde Science V.1

Krone, Julie Jan 95; Update 00

Kurzweil, Raymond Science V.2

Kwan, Michelle Sport V.3; Update 02

Laden, Osama bin

see bin Laden, Osama Apr 02

LaDuke, Winona WorLdr V.3; Update 00

Lalas, Alexi Sep 94

Lama, Dalai

see Dalai Lama Sep 98

Land, Edwin Science V.1

lang, k.d. Sep 93

Larson, Gary Author V.1

Lasseter, John Sep 00

Latino/Latina

see Hispanics

Lavigne, Avril PerfArt V.2

Lawrence, Jacob Artist V.1; Update 01

Leakey, Louis Science V.1

Leakey, Mary Science V.1

Lee, Harper Author V.9

Lee, Jeanette Apr 03

Lee, Spike Apr 92

Lee, Stan Author V.7; Update 02

Le Guin, Ursula K. Author V.8

Leibovitz, Annie Sep 96

Lemelson, Jerome Science V.3

Lemieux, Mario Jul 92; Update 93

LeMond, Greg Sport V.1

L'Engle, Madeleine Jan 92; Apr 01

Leno, Jay Jul 92

Leopold, Aldo WorLdr V.3

Lester, Julius Author V.7

Letterman, David Jan 95

Levi-Montalcini, Rita Science V.1

Lewis, C. S. Author V.3

Lewis, Carl Sep 96; Update 97

Lewis, John Jan 03

Lewis, Shari Jan 99

- Liberian**
Tubman, William V. S. WorLdr V.2
- librarians**
Avi Jan 93
Bush, Laura Apr 03
Cleary, Beverly Apr 94
Morrison, Lillian Author V.12
Morrison, Sam Sep 97
Rylant, Cynthia Author V.1
- Libyan**
Qaddafi, Muammar Apr 97
- Lidstrom, Nicklas** Sep 03
- Limbaugh, Rush** Sep 95; Update 02
- Lin, Maya** Sep 97
- Lindgren, Astrid** Author V.13
- Lionni, Leo** Author V.6
- Lipinski, Tara** Apr 98
- Lipsyte, Robert** Author V.12
- Lisanti, Mariangela** Sep 01
- Lithuanian**
Galdikas, Birutė. Science V.4
- Littrell, Brian**
see Backstreet Boys. Jan 00
- Lobo, Rebecca** Sport V.3
- Locklear, Heather** Jan 95
- Lopez, Charlotte** Apr 94
- López, George** PerfArt V.2
- Lopez, Jennifer** Jan 02
- Love, Susan** Science V.3
- Lovell, Jim** Jan 96
- Lowe, Alex** Sport V.4
- Lowman, Meg** Science V.4
- Lowry, Lois** Author V.4
- Lucas, George** Apr 97; Update 02
- Lucid, Shannon** Science V.2
- luge**
Otto, Sylke Sport V.8
- Lynch, Chris** Author V.13
- Ma, Yo-Yo** Jul 92
- Maathai, Wangari** WorLdr V.1
- Mac, Bernie** PerfArt V.1
- Macaulay, David** Author V.2
- MacLachlan, Patricia** Author V.2
- Madden, John** Sep 97
- Maddux, Greg** Sport V.3
- Maguire, Martie**
see Dixie Chicks. PerfArt V.1
- Maines, Natalie**
see Dixie Chicks. PerfArt V.1
- Malawian**
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu WorLdr V.2
- Mandela, Nelson** Jan 92; Update 94;
Update 01
- Mandela, Winnie** WorLdr V.2
- Mangel, Marcel**
see Marceau, Marcel PerfArt V.2
- Mankiller, Wilma** Apr 94
- Manning, Peyton** Sep 00
- Mantle, Mickey** Jan 96
- Marceau, Marcel** PerfArt V.2
- Margulis, Lynn** Sep 96
- Marino, Dan** Apr 93; Update 00
- Marrow, Tracy**
see Ice-T Apr 93
- Mars, Forrest Sr.** Science V.4
- Marsalis, Wynton** Apr 92
- Marshall, Thurgood** Jan 92; Update 93
- Martin, Ann M.** Jan 92
- Martin, Bernard** WorLdr V.3
- Martin, Ricky** Jan 00
- Martinez, Pedro** Sport V.5
- Masih, Iqbal** Jan 96
- mathematicians**
Dumitriu, Ioana Science V.3
Erdős, Paul Science V.2
Flannery, Sarah. Science V.5
Hopper, Grace Murray. Science V.5
Nash, John Forbes, Jr. Science V.7
- Mathers, Marshall III**
see Eminem Apr 03
- Mathis, Clint** Apr 03
- Mathison, Melissa** Author V.4
- Maxwell, Jody-Anne** Sep 98
- McCain, John** Apr 00
- McCarty, Oseola** Jan 99; Update 99
- McCary, Michael**
see Boyz II Men. Jan 96
- McClintock, Barbara** Oct 92
- McCully, Emily Arnold** Jul 92; Update 93
- McDaniel, Lurlene** Author V.14
- McEntire, Reba** Sep 95
- McGruder, Aaron** Author V.10
- McGwire, Mark** Jan 99; Update 99
- McKissack, Fredrick L.** Author V.3
- McKissack, Patricia C.** Author V.3
- McLean, A. J.**
see Backstreet Boys. Jan 00
- McNabb, Donovan** Apr 03
- Mead, Margaret** Science V.2
- Meaker, Marijane**
see Kerr, M.E. Author V.1

- Mebarak Ripoll, Shakira Isabel**
see Shakira PerfArt V.1
- Meltzer, Milton** Author V.11
- Menchu, Rigoberta** Jan 93
- Mendes, Chico** WorLdr V.1
- Messier, Mark** Apr 96
- Mexicans**
 Fox, Vicente Apr 03
 Jiménez, Francisco Author V.13
 Rivera, Diego Artist V.1
- military service**
 – **Israel**
 Rabin, Yitzhak Oct 92
 – **Libya**
 Qaddafi, Muammar Apr 97
 – **Somalia**
 Aidid, Mohammed Farah WorLdr V.2
 – **Uganda**
 Amin, Idi WorLdr V.2
 – **United States**
 Brooks, Vincent Sep 03
 Hopper, Grace Murray Science V.5
 McCain, John Apr 00
 Powell, Colin Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 95; Update 01
 Schwarzkopf, H. Norman Jan 92
 Stanford, John Sep 99
 – **Zaire**
 Mobutu Sese Seko WorLdr V.2
- Miller, Rand** Science V.5
- Miller, Robyn** Science V.5
- Miller, Shannon** Sep 94; Update 96
- Milosevic, Slobodan** Sep 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
- mime**
 Marceau, Marcel PerfArt V.2
- Mirra, Dave** Sep 02
- Mittermeier, Russell A.** WorLdr V.1
- Miyamoto, Shigeru** Science V.5
- Mobutu Sese Seko** WorLdr V.2; Update 97
- Moceanu, Dominique** Jan 98
- models**
 Banks, Tyra PerfArt V.2
 Crawford, Cindy Apr 93
- Mohajer, Dineh** Jan 02
- Monroe, Bill** Sep 97
- Montana, Joe** Jan 95; Update 95
- Moore, Henry** Artist V.1
- Morgan, Garrett** Science V.2
- Morissette, Alanis** Apr 97
- Morita, Akio** Science V.4
- Moroccan**
 Hassan II WorLdr V.2; Update 99
- Morris, Nathan**
see Boyz II Men Jan 96
- Morris, Wanya**
see Boyz II Men Jan 96
- Morrison, Lillian** Author V.12
- Morrison, Samuel** Sep 97
- Morrison, Toni** Jan 94
- Moseley, Jonny** Sport V.8
- Moses, Grandma** Artist V.1
- Moss, Cynthia** WorLdr V.3
- Moss, Randy** Sport V.4
- Mother Teresa**
see Teresa, Mother Apr 98
- mountain climbing**
 Hargreaves, Alison Jan 96
 Hillary, Sir Edmund Sep 96
 Kamler, Kenneth Science V.6
 Krakauer, Jon Author V.6
 Lowe, Alex Sport V.4
- movies**
see actors/actresses
see animators
see directors
see film critic
see producers
see screenwriters
- Mowat, Farley** Author V.8
- Mugabe, Robert** WorLdr V.2
- Muir, John** WorLdr V.3
- Muldowney, Shirley** Sport V.7
- Muniz, Frankie** Jan 01
- Murie, Margaret** WorLdr V.1
- Murie, Olaus J.** WorLdr V.1
- Murphy, Eddie** PerfArt V.2
- Murray, Ty** Sport V.7
- music**
 Aaliyah Jan 02
 Abdul, Paula Jan 92; Update 02
 Adams, Yolanda Apr 03
 Aguilera, Christina Apr 00
 Anderson, Marian Jan 94
 Ashanti PerfArt V.2
 Backstreet Boys Jan 00
 Battle, Kathleen Jan 93
 Blige, Mary J. Apr 02
 Boyz II Men Jan 96
 Brandy Apr 96
 Brooks, Garth Oct 92

- Carey, Mariah Apr 96
 Carpenter, Mary Chapin Sep 94
 Carter, Aaron Sep 02
 Clarkson, Kelly Jan 03
 Cobain, Kurt Sep 94
 Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy) Apr 98
 Coolio Sep 96
 Destiny's Child Apr 01
 Dion, Celine Sep 97
 Dixie Chicks PerfArt V.1
 Domingo, Placido Sep 95
 Eminem Apr 03
 Estefan, Gloria Jul 92
 Fitzgerald, Ella Jan 97
 Franklin, Aretha Apr 01
 Garcia, Jerry Jan 96
 Gillespie, Dizzy Apr 93
 Gilman, Billy Apr 02
 Grant, Amy Jan 95
 Guy, Jasmine Sep 93
 Hammer Jan 92
 Hanson Jan 98
 Hill, Faith Sep 01
 Hill, Lauryn Sep 99
 Houston, Whitney Sep 94
 Ice-T Apr 93
 Iglesias, Enrique Jan 03
 Jewel Sep 98
 Johnson, Johanna Apr 00
 Jones, Norah PerfArt V.2
 Jones, Quincy PerfArt V.2
 lang, k.d. Sep 93
 Lavigne, Avril PerfArt V.2
 Lopez, Jennifer Jan 02
 Ma, Yo-Yo Jul 92
 Marsalis, Wynton Apr 92
 Martin, Ricky Jan 00
 McEntire, Reba Sep 95
 Monroe, Bill Sep 97
 Morissette, Alanis Apr 97
 *N Sync Jan 01
 Nelly Sep 03
 Perlman, Itzhak Jan 95
 Queen Latifah Apr 92
 Rimes, LeAnn Jan 98
 Salt 'N' Pepa Apr 95
 Selena Jan 96
 Shakira PerfArt V.1
 Shakur, Tupac Apr 97
 Sinatra, Frank Jan 99
 Smith, Will Sep 94
 Spears, Britney Jan 01
 Stefani, Gwen Sep 03
 Stern, Isaac PerfArt V.1
 Suzuki, Shinichi Sep 98
 Twain, Shania Apr 99
 Uchida, Mitsuko Apr 99
 Usher PerfArt V.1
 Vidal, Christina PerfArt V.1
 Winans, CeCe Apr 00
Myers, Walter Dean Jan 93; Update 94
***N Sync** Jan 01
Nakamura, Leanne Apr 02
Nash, John Forbes, Jr. Science V.7
Native Americans
 LaDuke, Winona WorLdr V.3; Update 00
 Mankiller, Wilma Apr 94
 Menchu, Rigoberta Jan 93
Navratilova, Martina Jan 93; Update 94
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds Apr 93
Ndeti, Cosmas Sep 95
Nechita, Alexandra Jan 98
Nelly Sep 03
Nelson, Gaylord WorLdr V.3
Nelson, Marilyn Author V.13
Nevelson, Louise Artist V.1
New Zealanders
 Hillary, Sir Edmund Sep 96
 Jackson, Peter PerfArt V.2
Newbery Medal
 Alexander, Lloyd Author V.6
 Armstrong, William H. Author V.7
 Cleary, Beverly Apr 94
 Creech, Sharon Author V.5
 Curtis, Christopher Paul Author V.4;
 Update 00
 Cushman, Karen Author V.5
 Freedman, Russell Author V.14
 George, Jean Craighead Author V.3
 Hamilton, Virginia Author V.1;
 Author V.12
 Hesse, Karen Author V.5; Update 02
 Konigsburg, E. L. Author V.3
 L'Engle, Madeleine Jan 92; Apr 01
 MacLachlan, Patricia Author V.2
 Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds Apr 93
 O'Dell, Scott Author V.2
 Paterson, Katherine Author V.3
 Peck, Richard Author V.10
 Rylant, Cynthia Author V.1
 Sachar, Louis Author V.6
 Spere, Elizabeth George Sep 95

- Spinelli, Jerry Apr 93
 Taylor, Mildred D. Author V.1; Update 02
 Voight, Cynthia Oct 92
Nicklaus, Jack Sport V.2
Nielsen, Jerri Science V.7
Nigerians
 Olajuwon, Hakeem Sep 95
 Saro-Wiwa, Ken. WorLdr V.1
Nixon, Joan Lowery Author V.1
Nixon, Richard Sep 94
Nkrumah, Kwame WorLdr V.2
Nobel Prize
 Alvarez, Luis W. Science V.3
 Aung San Suu Kyi Apr 96; Update 98;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Bardeen, John Science V.1
 Bethe, Hans A. Science V.3
 Dalai Lama Sep 98
 de Klerk, F.W. Apr 94
 Elion, Gertrude Science V.6
 Gilbert, Walter Science V.2
 Gorbachev, Mikhail Jan 92
 Kim Dae-jung Sep 01
 Levi-Montalcini, Rita Science V.1
 Mandela, Nelson. Jan 92; Update 94;
 Update 01
 McClintock, Barbara Oct 92
 Menchu, Rigoberta Jan 93
 Morrison, Toni Jan 94
 Nash, John Forbes, Jr. Science V.7
 Ochoa, Severo Jan 94
 Pauling, Linus Jan 95
 Sadat, Anwar WorLdr V.2
 Teresa, Mother Apr 98
 Watson, James D. Science V.1
Norman, Greg Jan 94
Norwegian
 Brundtland, Gro Harlem Science V.3
Norwood, Brandy
 see Brandy Apr 96
Novello, Antonia Apr 92; Update 93
***N Sync** Jan 01
Nureyev, Rudolf Apr 93
Nye, Bill Science V.2
Nye, Naomi Shihab Author V.8
Nyerere, Julius Kambarage WorLdr V.2;
 Update 99
Ocampo, Adriana C. Science V.8
Ochoa, Ellen Apr 01; Update 02
Ochoa, Severo Jan 94
O'Connor, Sandra Day Jul 92
O'Dell, Scott Author V.2
O'Donnell, Rosie Apr 97; Update 02
Ohno, Apolo Sport V.8
O'Keefe, Georgia Artist V.1
Olajuwon, Hakeem Sep 95
Oleynik, Larisa Sep 96
Oliver, Patsy Ruth WorLdr V.1
Olsen, Ashley Sep 95
Olsen, Mary Kate Sep 95
Olympics
 Ali, Muhammad Sport V.2
 Ammann, Simon Sport V.8
 Armstrong, Lance. Sep 00; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Bahrke, Shannon Sport V.8
 Bailey, Donovan Sport V.2
 Baiul, Oksana Apr 95
 Bird, Larry Jan 92; Update 98
 Blair, Bonnie Apr 94
 Boulmerka, Hassiba Sport V.1
 Capriati, Jennifer Sport V.6
 Carter, Vince Sport V.5; Update 01
 Chastain, Brandi Sport V.4; Update 00
 Clark, Kelly Sport V.8
 Davenport, Lindsay Sport V.5
 Devers, Gail Sport V.2
 Dragila, Stacy Sport V.6
 Dunlap, Alison Sport V.7
 Evans, Janet Jan 95; Update 96
 Ewing, Patrick Jan 95; Update 02
 Fernandez, Lisa Sport V.5
 Flowers, Vonetta Sport V.8
 Freeman, Cathy Jan 01
 Fu Mingxia Sport V.5
 Garnett, Kevin Sport V.6
 Granato, Cammi. Sport V.8
 Griffith Joyner, Florence Sport V.1;
 Update 98
 Hamm, Mia Sport V.2; Update 00
 Harding, Tonya Sep 94
 Hasek, Dominik Sport V.3
 Hill, Grant Sport V.1
 Hughes, Sarah Jan 03
 Jansen, Dan Apr 94
 Johnson, Michael Jan 97; Update 00
 Jones, Marion Sport V.5
 Joyner-Kersee, Jackie. Oct 92; Update
 96; Update 97; Update 98
 Kerrigan, Nancy Apr 94
 Klug, Chris Sport V.8

- Kwan, Michelle Sport V.3; Update 02
 Lewis, Carl Sep 96
 Lipinski, Tara Apr 98
 Lobo, Rebecca Sport V.3
 Miller, Shannon Sep 94; Update 96
 Moceanu, Dominique Jan 98
 Moseley, Jonny Sport V.8
 Ohno, Apolo Sport V.8
 Otto, Sylke Sport V.8
 Pippig, Uta Sport V.1
 Richardson, Dot Sport V.2; Update 00
 Roba, Fatuma Sport V.3
 Robinson, David Sep 96
 Roy, Patrick Sport V.7
 Rudolph, Wilma Apr 95
 Runyan, Marla Apr 02
 Sakic, Joe Sport V.6
 Sanborn, Ryne Sport V.8
 Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa Sport V.1
 Schwikert, Tasha Sport V.7
 Scurry, Briana Jan 00
 Shea, Jim, Jr. Sport V.8
 Stockton, John Sport V.3
 Street, Picabo Sport V.3
 Summitt, Pat Sport V.3
 Swoopes, Sheryl Sport V.2
 Thompson, Jenny Sport V.5
 Van Dyken, Amy Sport V.3; Update 00
 Williams, Serena Sport V.4; Update 00;
 Update 02
 Williams, Venus Jan 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Yamaguchi, Kristi Apr 92
 Zmeskal, Kim Jan 94
O'Neal, Shaquille Sep 93
Opdyke, Irene Gut Author V.9
Oppenheimer, J. Robert Science V.1
Otto, Sylke Sport V.8
painters
see artists
Pak, Se Ri Sport V.4
Pakistanis
 Bhutto, Benazir Apr 95; Update 99
 Masih, Iqbal Jan 96
Palestinian
 Arafat, Yasir Sep 94; Update 94;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
 98; Update 00; Update 01; Update 02
Park, Linda Sue Author V.12
Parkinson, Jennifer Apr 95
Parks, Gordon Artist V.1
Parks, Rosa Apr 92; Update 94
Pascal, Francine Author V.6
Paterson, Katherine Author V.3
Patrick, Ruth Science V.3
Patterson, Ryan Science V.7
Pauley, Jane Oct 92
Pauling, Linus Jan 95
Paulsen, Gary Author V.1
Payton, Walter Jan 00
Peck, Richard Author V.10
Peet, Bill Author V.4
Pei, I.M. Artist V.1
Pelé Sport V.1
Perlman, Itzhak Jan 95
Perot, H. Ross Apr 92; Update 93;
 Update 95; Update 96
Perry, Luke Jan 92
Peterson, Roger Troy WorLdr V.1
Petty, Richard Sport V.2
philanthropist
 McCarty, Oseola Jan 99; Update 99
philosopher
 Caplan, Arthur Science V.6
Phoenix, River Apr 94
photographers
 Adams, Ansel Artist V.1
 Bourke-White, Margaret Artist V.1
 Land, Edwin Science V.1
 Leibovitz, Annie Sep 96
 Parks, Gordon Artist V.1
Pierce, Tamora Author V.13
Pike, Christopher Sep 96
pilot
 Van Meter, Vicki Jan 95
Pine, Elizabeth Michele Jan 94
Pinkney, Andrea Davis Author V.10
Pinkney, Jerry Author V.2
Pinkwater, Daniel Author V.8
Pinsky, Robert Author V.7
Pippen, Scottie Oct 92
Pippig, Uta Sport V.1
Pitt, Brad Sep 98
playwrights
 Bennett, Cherie Author V.9
 Hansberry, Lorraine Author V.5
 Hughes, Langston Author V.7
 Wilson, August Author 98
poets
 Brooks, Gwendolyn Author V.3
 Dove, Rita Jan 94
 Dunbar, Paul Lawrence Author V.8

Grimes, Nikki Author V.14
 Hughes, Langston. Author V.7
 Jewel Sep 98
 Morrison, Lillian Author V.12
 Nelson, Marilyn. Author V.13
 Nye, Naomi Shihab Author V.8
 Pinsky, Robert Author V.7
 Prelutsky, Jack Author V.2
 Senghor, Léopold Sédar WorLdr V.2
 Silverstein, Shel Author V.3; Update 99
 Sones, Sonya Author V.11
 Soto, Gary Author V.5
 Stepanek, Mattie. Apr 02

Polish

John Paul II. Oct 92; Update 94;
 Update 95
 Opdyke, Irene Gut. Author V.9

political leaders

Abzug, Bella Sep 98
 Amin, Idi WorLdr V.2
 Annan, Kofi Jan 98; Update 01
 Arafat, Yasir. Sep 94; Update 94;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
 98; Update 00; Update 01; Update 02
 Aristide, Jean-Bertrand Jan 95; Update 01
 Babbitt, Bruce Jan 94
 Baker, James Oct 92
 Banda, Hastings Kamuzu WorLdr V.2
 Bhutto, Benazir. Apr 95; Update 99;
 Update 02
 Boutros-Ghali, Boutros Apr 93; Update 98
 Brundtland, Gro Harlem Science V.3
 Bush, George Jan 92
 Bush, George W. Sep 00; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Carter, Jimmy Apr 95; Update 02
 Castro, Fidel. Jul 92; Update 94
 Cheney, Dick Jan 02
 Cisneros, Henry Sep 93
 Clinton, Bill. Jul 92; Update 94;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
 98; Update 99; Update 00; Update 01
 Clinton, Hillary Rodham. Apr 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 96; Update
 99; Update 00; Update 01
 de Klerk, F.W. Apr 94; Update 94
 Dole, Bob Jan 96; Update 96
 Duke, David Apr 92
 Fox, Vicente. Apr 03
 Gingrich, Newt Apr 95; Update 99
 Giuliani, Rudolph Sep 02

Glenn, John Jan 99
 Gorbachev, Mikhail Jan 92; Update 94;
 Update 96
 Gore, Al Jan 93; Update 96; Update 97;
 Update 98; Update 99; Update 00; Update
 01
 Hussein, King Apr 99
 Hussein, Saddam. Jul 92; Update 96;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Jackson, Jesse. Sep 95; Update 01
 Jordan, Barbara Apr 96
 Kaunda, Kenneth WorLdr V.2
 Kenyatta, Jomo WorLdr V.2
 Kim Dae-jung Sep 01
 Lewis, John. Jan 03
 Mandela, Nelson. Jan 92; Update 94;
 Update 01
 McCain, John Apr 00
 Milosevic, Slobodan Sep 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Mobutu Sese Seko WorLdr V.2; Update 97
 Mugabe, Robert WorLdr V.2
 Nelson, Gaylord. WorLdr V.3
 Nixon, Richard Sep 94
 Nkrumah, Kwame WorLdr V.2
 Nyerere, Julius Kambarage WorLdr V.2;
 Update 99
 Perot, H. Ross. Apr 92; Update 93;
 Update 95; Update 96
 Rabin, Yitzhak Oct 92; Update 93;
 Update 94; Update 95
 Rice, Condoleezza. Apr 02
 Robinson, Mary. Sep 93
 Sadat, Anwar WorLdr V.2
 Savimbi, Jonas WorLdr V.2
 Schroeder, Pat Jan 97
 Senghor, Léopold Sédar WorLdr V.2
 Tubman, William V. S. WorLdr V.2
 Ventura, Jesse Apr 99; Update 02
 Yeltsin, Boris. Apr 92; Update 93;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 98; Update
 00

Pope of the Roman Catholic Church

John Paul II. Oct 92; Update 94;
 Update 95

Portman, Natalie Sep 99

Potter, Beatrix Author V.8

Powell, Colin Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 95; Update 01

Prelutsky, Jack Author V.2

- presidents**
- **Cuba**
Castro, Fidel Jul 92; Update 94
 - **Egypt**
Sadat, Anwar WorLdr V.2
 - **Ghana**
Nkrumah, Kwame WorLdr V.2
 - **Haiti**
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand Jan 95;
Update 01
 - **Iraq**
Hussein, Saddam Jul 92; Update 96;
Update 01
 - **Ireland**
Robinson, Mary Sep 93
 - **Kenya**
Kenyatta, Jomo WorLdr V.2
 - **Liberia**
Tubman, William V. S. WorLdr V.2
 - **Malawi**
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu WorLdr V.2
 - **Republic of South Africa**
de Klerk, F.W. Apr 94; Update 9
Mandela, Nelson Jan 92; Update 94;
Update 01
 - **Republic of Tanzania**
Nyerere, Julius Kambarage WorLdr V.2;
Update 99
 - **Russian Federation**
Yeltsin, Boris Apr 92; Update 93;
Update 95; Update 96; Update 98; Update
00
 - **Senegal**
Senghor, Léopold Sédar WorLdr V.2
 - **South Korea**
Kim Dae-jung Sep 01
 - **Soviet Union**
Gorbachev, Mikhail Jan 92
 - **Uganda**
Amin, Idi WorLdr V.2
 - **United States**
Bush, George Jan 92
Bush, George W. Sep 00; Update 00;
Update 01; Update 02
Carter, Jimmy Apr 95; Update 02
Clinton, Bill Jul 92; Update 94;
Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
98; Update 99; Update 00; Update 01
Nixon, Richard Sep 94
 - **Yugoslavia**
Milosevic, Slobodan Sep 99; Update
00; Update 01; Update 02
 - **Zaire**
Mobutu Sese Seko WorLdr V.2;
Update 97
 - **Zambia**
Kaunda, Kenneth WorLdr V.2
 - **Zimbabwe**
Mugabe, Robert WorLdr V.2
- Priestley, Jason** Apr 92
- prime ministers**
- **Israel**
Rabin, Yitzhak Oct 92; Update 93;
Update 94; Update 95
 - **Norway**
Brundtland, Gro Harlem Science V.3
 - **Pakistan**
Bhutto, Benazir Apr 95; Update 99;
Update 02
- Prinze, Freddie, Jr.** Apr 00
- Probst, Jeff** Jan 01
- producers**
- Barrymore, Drew Jan 01
 - Carter, Chris Author V.4
 - Chan, Jackie PerfArt V.1
 - Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy) Apr 98
 - Cousteau, Jacques Jan 93
 - Groppe, Laura Science V.5
 - Hillenburg, Stephen Author V.14
 - Jackson, Peter PerfArt V.2
 - Jones, Chuck Author V.12
 - Jones, Quincy PerfArt V.2
 - Lucas, George Apr 97; Update 02
 - Spielberg, Steven Jan 94
 - Whedon, Joss Author V.9
 - Williamson, Kevin Author V.6
- Puerto Ricans**
see also Hispanics
- Lopez, Charlotte Apr 94
 - Martin, Ricky Jan 00
 - Novello, Antonia Apr 92
- Puff Daddy**
see Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy) Apr 98
- Puffy**
see Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy) Apr 98
- Pullman, Philip** Author V.9
- Qaddafi, Muammar** Apr 97
- Qing, Dai**
see Dai Qing WorLdr V.3
- Queen Latifah** Apr 92
- Quesada, Vicente Fox**
see Fox, Vicente Apr 03

- Quintanilla, Selena**
see Selena Jan 96
- Rabin, Yitzhak** Oct 92; Update 93;
 Update 94; Update 95
- Radcliffe, Daniel** Jan 02
- radio**
 Hunter-Gault, Charlayne Jan 00
 Limbaugh, Rush Sep 95; Update 02
 Roberts, Cokie Apr 95
- rappers**
see music
- Raymond, Usher, IV**
see Usher PerfArt V.1
- Reeve, Christopher** Jan 97; Update 02
- Reid Banks, Lynne** Author V.2
- religious leaders**
 Aristide, Jean-Bertrand Jan 95; Update 01
 Chavis, Benjamin Jan 94; Update 94
 Dalai Lama Sep 98
 Farrakhan, Louis Jan 97
 Jackson, Jesse Sep 95; Update 01
 Pope John Paul II Oct 92; Update 94;
 Update 95
 Teresa, Mother Apr 98
- Rennison, Louise** Author V.10
- Reno, Janet** Sep 93; Update 98
- representatives**
 Abzug, Bella Sep 98
 Cheney, Dick Jan 02
 Gingrich, Newt Apr 95; Update 99
 Jordan, Barbara Apr 96
 Lewis, John Jan 03
 Schroeder, Pat Jan 97
- Republican Party**
 Baker, James Oct 92
 Bush, George Jan 92
 Bush, George W. Sep 00; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Cheney, Dick Jan 02
 Gingrich, Newt Apr 95; Update 99
 Giuliani, Rudolph Sep 02
 Nixon, Richard Sep 94
- Rice, Anne** Author V.3
- Rice, Condoleezza** Apr 02
- Rice, Jerry** Apr 93
- Richardson, Dot** Sport V.2; Update 00
- Richardson, Kevin**
see Backstreet Boys Jan 00
- Ride, Sally** Jan 92
- Riley, Dawn** Sport V.4
- Rimes, LeAnn** Jan 98
- Rinaldi, Ann** Author V.8
- Ringgold, Faith** Author V.2
- Ripken, Cal, Jr.** Sport V.1; Update 01
- Risca, Viviana** Sep 00
- Rivera, Diego** Artist V.1
- Roba, Fatuma** Sport V.3
- Roberts, Cokie** Apr 95
- Roberts, Julia** Sep 01
- Robinson, David** Sep 96
- Robinson, Jackie** Sport V.3
- Robinson, Mary** Sep 93
- Robison, Emily**
see Dixie Chicks PerfArt V.1
- rock climbing**
 Allen, Tori Sport V.9
- Rockwell, Norman** Artist V.1
- Roddick, Andy** Jan 03
- rodeo**
 Murray, Ty Sport V.7
- Rodman, Dennis** Apr 96; Update 99
- Rodriguez, Alex** Sport V.6
- Rodriguez, Eloy** Science V.2
- Romanians**
 Dumitriu, Ioana Science V.3
 Nechita, Alexandra Jan 98
 Risca, Viviana Sep 00
- Romero, John** Science V.8
- Roper, Dee Dee**
see Salt 'N' Pepa Apr 95
- Rosa, Emily** Sep 98
- Rose, Pete** Jan 92
- Rowan, Carl** Sep 01
- Rowland, Kelly**
see Destiny's Child Apr 01
- Rowling, J. K.** Sep 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
- Roy, Patrick** Sport V.7
- royalty**
 Diana, Princess of Wales Jul 92;
 Update 96; Update 97; Jan 98
 Haile Selassie WorLdr V.2
 Hassan II WorLdr V.2; Update 99
 Hussein, King Apr 99
- Rubin, Jamie** Science V.8
- Rudolph, Wilma** Apr 95
- running**
 Bailey, Donovan Sport V.2
 Boulmerka, Hassiba Sport V.1
 Freeman, Cathy Jan 01
 Griffith Joyner, Florence Sport V.1;
 Update 98

Johnson, Michael Jan 97; Update 00
 Jones, Marion Sport V.5
 Lewis, Carl Sep 96; Update 97
 Ndeti, Cosmas Sep 95
 Pippig, Uta Sport V.1
 Roba, Fatuma Sport V.3
 Rudolph, Wilma Apr 95
 Runyan, Marla Apr 02
 Webb, Alan Sep 01
Runyan, Marla Apr 02

Russians

Chagall, Marc Artist V.1
 Fedorov, Sergei Apr 94; Update 94
 Gorbachev, Mikhail Jan 92; Update 96
 Nevelson, Louise Artist V.1
 Tartakovsky, Genndy Author V.11
 Yeltsin, Boris Apr 92; Update 93;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 98; Update
 00

Ryan, Nolan Oct 92; Update 93

Ryan, Pam Muñoz Author V.12

Ryder, Winona Jan 93

Rylant, Cynthia Author V.1

Sabin, Albert Science V.1

Sachar, Louis Author V.6

Sacks, Oliver Science V.3

Sadat, Anwar WorLdr V.2

Sagan, Carl Science V.1

sailing

Riley, Dawn Sport V.4

Sakic, Joe Sport V.6

Salinger, J.D. Author V.2

Salk, Jonas Jan 94; Update 95

Salt 'N' Pepa Apr 95

Sampras, Pete Jan 97; Update 02

Sanborn, Ryne Sport V.8

Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa Sport V.1

Sanders, Barry Sep 95; Update 99

Sanders, Deion Sport V.1

Sapp, Warren Sport V.5

Saro-Wiwa, Ken WorLdr V.1

Satcher, David Sep 98

Saudi

bin Laden, Osama Apr 02

Savimbi, Jonas WorLdr V.2

Scarry, Richard Sep 94

Schroeder, Pat Jan 97

Schulz, Charles M Author V.2; Update 00

Schwarzkopf, H. Norman Jan 92

Schwikert, Tasha Sport V.7

science competitions

Cohen, Adam Ezra Apr 97

Lisanti, Mariangela Sep 01

Patterson, Ryan Science V.7

Pine, Elizabeth Michele Jan 94

Risca, Viviana Sep 00

Rosa, Emily Sep 98

Rubin, Jamie Science V.8

Toro, Natalia Sep 99

Vasan, Nina Science V.7

scientists

Alvarez, Luis W. Science V.3

Asimov, Isaac Jul 92

Askins, Renee WorLdr V.1

Attenborough, David Science V.4

Ballard, Robert Science V.4

Bardeen, John Science V.1

Barton, Hazel Science V.6

Berners-Lee, Tim Science V.7

Bethe, Hans A. Science V.3

Brundtland, Gro Harlem Science V.3

Calderone, Mary S. Science V.3

Carson, Ben Science V.4

Carson, Rachel WorLdr V.1

Collins, Francis Science V.6

Córdova, France Science V.7

Cray, Seymour Science V.2

Earle, Sylvia Science V.1

Elion, Gertrude Science V.6

Engelbart, Douglas Science V.5

Fauci, Anthony S. Science V.7

Fossey, Dian Science V.1

Galdikas, Biruté Science V.4

Gayle, Helene Science V.8

Gilbert, Walter Science V.2

Goodall, Jane Science V.1; Update 02

Gould, Stephen Jay Science V.2;
 Update 02

Grandin, Temple Science V.3

Gwaltney, John Langston Science V.3

Harris, Bernard Science V.3

Hawking, Stephen Apr 92

Healy, Bernadine Science V.1; Update 01

Hendrickson, Sue Science V.7

Ho, David Science V.6

Horner, Jack Science V.1

Jackson, Shirley Ann Science V.2

Jemison, Mae Oct 92

Krim, Mathilde Science V.1

Kurzweil, Raymond Science V.2

- Leakey, Louis Science V.1
 Leakey, Mary Science V.1
 Levi-Montalcini, Rita Science V.1
 Love, Susan Science V.3
 Lowman, Meg Science V.4
 Lucid, Shannon Science V.2
 Margulis, Lynn Sep 96
 McClintock, Barbara Oct 92
 Mead, Margaret Science V.2
 Mittermeier, Russell A. WorLdr V.1
 Moss, Cynthia WorLdr V.3
 Ocampo, Adriana C. Science V.8
 Ochoa, Severo Jan 94
 Oppenheimer, J. Robert Science V.1
 Patrick, Ruth Science V.3
 Pauling, Linus Jan 95
 Ride, Sally Jan 92
 Rodriguez, Eloy Science V.2
 Sabin, Albert Science V.1
 Sacks, Oliver Science V.3
 Sagan, Carl Science V.1
 Salk, Jonas Jan 94; Update 95
 Satcher, David Sep 98
 Tarter, Jill Science V.8
 Thomas, Lewis Apr 94
 Tuttle, Merlin Apr 97
 Villa-Komaroff, Lydia Science V.6
 Warrick, Earl Science V.8
 Watson, James D. Science V.1
 Wilson, Edward O. Science V.8
Scieszka, Jon Author V.9
Scottish
 Muir, John WorLdr V.3
screenwriters
 Affleck, Ben Sep 99
 Carter, Chris Author V.4
 Crichton, Michael Author V.5
 Jackson, Peter PerfArt V.2
 Mathison, Melissa Author V.4
 Peet, Bill Author V.4
 Whedon, Joss Author V.9
 Williamson, Kevin Author V.6
sculptors
see artists
Scurry, Briana Jan 00
Sealfon, Rebecca Sep 97
Seinfeld, Jerry Oct 92; Update 98
Selena Jan 96
Seles, Monica Jan 96
senators
 Clinton, Hillary Rodham Apr 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 96; Update
 99; Update 00; Update 01
 Dole, Bob Jan 96; Update 96
 Glenn, John Jan 99
 Gore, Al Jan 93; Update 96; Update 97;
 Update 98; Update 99; Update 00; Update
 01
 McCain, John Apr 00
 Nelson, Gaylord WorLdr V.3
 Nixon, Richard Sep 94
Sendak, Maurice Author V.2
Senegalese
 Senghor, Léopold Sédar WorLdr V.2
Senghor, Léopold Sédar WorLdr V.2
Serbian
 Milosevic, Slobodan Sep 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
Seuss, Dr. Jan 92
Shabazz, Betty Apr 98
Shakira PerfArt V.1
Shakur, Tupac Apr 97
Shatner, William Apr 95
Shea, Jim, Jr. Sport V.8
Shula, Don Apr 96
Silva, Fabiola da
see da Silva, Fabiola Sport V.9
Silverstein, Shel Author V.3; Update 99
Simmons, Ruth Sep 02
Sinatra, Frank Jan 99
singers
see music
Siskel, Gene Sep 99
skateboarding
 Hawk, Tony Apr 01
skating (ice)
 Baiul, Oksana Apr 95
 Blair, Bonnie Apr 94; Update 95
 Harding, Tonya Sep 94
 Hughes, Sarah Jan 03
 Jansen, Dan Apr 94
 Kerrigan, Nancy Apr 94
 Kwan, Michelle Sport V.3; Update 02
 Lipinski, Tara Apr 98
 Ohno, Apolo Sport V.8
 Yamaguchi, Kristi Apr 92
skating (in-line)
 da Silva, Fabiola Sport V.9

skeleton

Shea, Jim, Jr. Sport V.8

skiing

Amman, Simon Sport V.8

Bahrke, Shannon Sport V.8

Moseley, Jonny Sport V.8

Street, Picabo Sport V.3

Sleator, William Author V.11

sled-dog racing

Butcher, Susan Sport V.1

Zirkle, Aliy Sport V.6

Small, David Author V.10

Smith, Emmitt Sep 94

Smith, Will Sep 94

Smyers, Karen Sport V.4

Snicket, Lemony Author V.12

snowboarding

Clark, Kelly Sport V.8

Dakides, Tara Sport V.7

Klug, Chris Sport V.8

soccer

Chastain, Brandi Sport V.4; Update 00

Hamm, Mia Sport V.2; Update 00

Lalas, Alexi Sep 94

Mathis, Clint Apr 03

Pelé Sport V.1

Scurry, Briana Jan 00

softball

Fernandez, Lisa Sport V.5

Richardson, Dot Sport V.2; Update 00

Somalian

Aidid, Mohammed Farah WorLdr V.2

Sones, Sonya Author V.11

Soren, Tabitha Jan 97

Sorenstam, Annika Sport V.6

Sosa, Sammy Jan 99; Update 99

Soto, Gary Author V.5

South Africans

de Klerk, F.W. Apr 94; Update 94

Mandela, Nelson Jan 92; Update 94;

Update 01

Mandela, Winnie WorLdr V.2

South Korean

Pak, Se Ri Sport V.4

Spaniards

Domingo, Placido Sep 95

Garcia, Sergio Sport V.7

Iglesias, Enrique Jan 03

Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa Sport V.1

Speare, Elizabeth George Sep 95

Spears, Britney Jan 01

spelling bee competition

Andrews, Ned Sep 94

Guey, Wendy Sep 96

Hooper, Geoff Jan 94

Maxwell, Jody-Anne Sep 98

Sealfon, Rebecca Sep 97

Thampy, George Sep 00

Spelman, Lucy Science V.6

Spencer, Diana

see Diana, Princess of Wales Jul 92;

Update 96; Update 97; Jan 98

Spielberg, Steven Jan 94; Update 94;

Update 95

Spinelli, Jerry Apr 93

Spock, Dr. Benjamin Sep 95; Update 98

sports

Aaron, Hank Sport V.1

Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem Sport V.1

Agassi, Andre Jul 92

Aikman, Troy Apr 95; Update 01

Ali, Muhammad Sport V.2

Allen, Marcus Sep 97

Allen, Tori Sport V.9

Ammann, Simon Sport V.8

Andretti, Mario Sep 94

Armstrong, Lance Sep 00; Update 00;

Update 01; Update 02

Ashe, Arthur Sep 93

Bahrke, Shannon Sport V.8

Bailey, Donovan Sport V.2

Baiul, Oksana Apr 95

Barkley, Charles Apr 92; Update 02

Beachley, Layne Sport V.9

Bird, Larry Jan 92; Update 98

Bird, Sue Sport V.9

Blair, Bonnie Apr 94

Bonds, Barry Jan 03

Boulmerka, Hassiba Sport V.1

Brady, Tom Sport V.7

Bryant, Kobe Apr 99

Butcher, Susan Sport V.1

Capriati, Jennifer Sport V.6

Carter, Vince Sport V.5; Update 01

Chamberlain, Wilt Sport V.4

Chastain, Brandi Sport V.4; Update 00

Clark, Kelly Sport V.8

Dakides, Tara Sport V.7

Daniel, Beth Sport V.1

da Silva, Fabiola Sport V.9

Davenport, Lindsay Sport V.5

Dayne, Ron Apr 00

CUMULATIVE INDEX

- Devers, Gail Sport V.2
 Dragila, Stacy Sport V.6
 Driscoll, Jean Sep 97
 Dumars, Joe Sport V.3; Update 99
 Dunlap, Alison Sport V.7
 Earnhardt, Dale Apr 01
 Elway, John Sport V.2; Update 99
 Evans, Janet Jan 95
 Evert, Chris Sport V.1
 Ewing, Patrick Jan 95; Update 02
 Favre, Brett Sport V.2
 Fedorov, Sergei Apr 94; Update 94
 Fernandez, Lisa Sport V.5
 Flowers, Vonetta Sport V.8
 Freeman, Cathy Jan 01
 Fu Mingxia Sport V.5
 Garcia, Sergio Sport V.7
 Garnett, Kevin Sport V.6
 George, Eddie Sport V.6
 Gordon, Jeff Apr 99
 Graf, Steffi Jan 92; Update 01
 Granato, Cammi Sport V.8
 Gretzky, Wayne Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 99
 Griese, Brian Jan 02
 Griffey, Ken, Jr. Sport V.1
 Griffith Joyner, Florence Sport V.1;
 Update 98
 Hamm, Mia Sport V.2; Update 00
 Harbaugh, Jim Sport V.3
 Hardaway, Anfernee "Penny" Sport V.2
 Harding, Tonya Sep 94
 Hasek, Dominik Sport V.3
 Hawk, Tony Apr 01
 Hernandez, Livan Apr 98
 Hill, Grant Sport V.1
 Hingis, Martina Sport V.2
 Hogan, Hulk Apr 92
 Holdsclaw, Chamique Sep 00
 Howe, Gordie Sport V.2
 Hughes, Sarah Jan 03
 Iverson, Allen Sport V.7
 Jackson, Bo Jan 92; Update 93
 Jagr, Jaromir Sport V.5
 Jansen, Dan Apr 94
 Jeter, Derek Sport V.4
 Johnson, Jimmy Jan 98
 Johnson, Magic Apr 92; Update 02
 Johnson, Michael Jan 97; Update 00
 Johnson, Randy Sport V.9
 Jones, Marion Sport V.5
 Jordan, Michael Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 99; Update
 01
 Joyner-Kersee, Jackie Oct 92; Update
 96; Update 97; Update 98
 Kerrigan, Nancy Apr 94
 Kidd, Jason Sport V.9
 Kiraly, Karch Sport V.4
 Klug, Chris Sport V.8
 Kwan, Michelle Sport V.3; Update 02
 Lalas, Alexi Sep 94
 Lee, Jeanette Apr 03
 Lemieux, Mario Jul 92; Update 93
 LeMond, Greg Sport V.1
 Lewis, Carl Sep 96; Update 97
 Lidstrom, Nicklas Sep 03
 Lipinski, Tara Apr 98
 Lobo, Rebecca Sport V.3
 Lowe, Alex Sport V.4
 Madden, John Sep 97
 Maddux, Greg Sport V.3
 Manning, Peyton Sep 00
 Mantle, Mickey Jan 96
 Marino, Dan Apr 93; Update 00
 Martinez, Pedro Sport V.5
 Mathis, Clint Apr 03
 McGwire, Mark Jan 99; Update 99
 McNabb, Donovan Apr 03
 Messier, Mark Apr 96
 Miller, Shannon Sep 94; Update 96
 Mirra, Dave Sep 02
 Moceanu, Dominique Jan 98
 Montana, Joe Jan 95; Update 95
 Moseley, Jonny Sport V.8
 Moss, Randy Sport V.4
 Muldowney, Shirley Sport V.7
 Murray, Ty Sport V.7
 Navratilova, Martina Jan 93; Update 94
 Ndeti, Cosmas Sep 95
 Nicklaus, Jack Sport V.2
 Ohno, Apolo Sport V.8
 Olajuwon, Hakeem Sep 95
 O'Neal, Shaquille Sep 93
 Otto, Sylke Sport V.8
 Pak, Se Ri Sport V.4
 Payton, Walter Jan 00
 Pelé Sport V.1
 Petty, Richard Sport V.2
 Pippen, Scottie Oct 92
 Pippig, Uta Sport V.1
 Rice, Jerry Apr 93

- Richardson, Dot Sport V.2; Update 00
 Riley, Dawn Sport V.4
 Ripken, Cal, Jr. Sport V.1; Update 01
 Roba, Fatuma Sport V.3
 Robinson, David Sep 96
 Robinson, Jackie Sport V.3
 Roddick, Andy Jan 03
 Rodman, Dennis Apr 96; Update 99
 Rodriguez, Alex Sport V.6
 Rose, Pete Jan 92
 Roy, Patrick Sport V.7
 Rudolph, Wilma Apr 95
 Runyan, Marla Apr 02
 Ryan, Nolan Oct 92; Update 93
 Sakic, Joe Sport V.6
 Sampras, Pete Jan 97; Update 02
 Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa Sport V.1
 Sanders, Barry Sep 95; Update 99
 Sanders, Deion Sport V.1
 Sapp, Warren Sport V.5
 Schwikert, Tasha Sport V.7
 Scurry, Briana Jan 00
 Seles, Monica Jan 96
 Shea, Jim, Jr. Sport V.8
 Shula, Don Apr 96
 Smith, Emmitt Sep 94
 Smyers, Karen Sport V.4
 Sorenstam, Annika Sport V.6
 Sosa, Sammy Jan 99; Update 99
 Stewart, Kordell Sep 98
 Stewart, Tony Sport V.9
 Stiles, Jackie Sport V.6
 Stockton, John Sport V.3
 Street, Picabo Sport V.3
 Summitt, Pat Sport V.3
 Swoopes, Sheryl Sport V.2
 Thompson, Jenny Sport V.5
 Van Dyken, Amy Sport V.3; Update 00
 Ventura, Jesse Apr 99; Update 02
 Vernon, Mike Jan 98; Update 02
 Vick, Michael Sport V.9
 Ward, Charlie Apr 94
 Warner, Kurt Sport V.4
 Webb, Alan Sep 01
 Webb, Karrie Sport V.5; Update 01;
 Update 02
 Weinke, Chris Apr 01
 White, Reggie Jan 98
 Williams, Serena Sport V.4; Update 00;
 Update 02
 Williams, Ted Sport V.9
 Williams, Venus Jan 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
 Willingham, Tyrone Sep 02
 Winfield, Dave Jan 93
 Woods, Tiger Sport V.1; Update 00;
 Sport V.6
 Yamaguchi, Kristi Apr 92
 Yao Ming Sep 03
 Yelas, Jay Sport V.9
 Young, Steve Jan 94; Update 00
 Yzerman, Steve Sport V.2
 Zirkle, Aliy Sport V.6
 Zmeskal, Kim Jan 94
Stachowski, Richie Science V.3
Stanford, John Sep 99
Stefani, Gwen Sep 03
Steinem, Gloria Oct 92
Stern, Isaac PerfArt V.1
Stewart, Kordell Sep 98
Stewart, Patrick Jan 94
Stewart, Tony Sport V.9
Stiles, Jackie Sport V.6
Stiles, Julia PerfArt V.2
Stine, R.L. Apr 94
Stockman, Shawn
see Boyz II Men Jan 96
Stockton, John Sport V.3
Strasser, Todd Author V.7
Street, Picabo Sport V.3
Strug, Kerri Sep 96
Summitt, Pat Sport V.3
Supreme Court
 Blackmun, Harry Jan 00
 Burger, Warren Sep 95
 Ginsburg, Ruth Bader Jan 94
 Marshall, Thurgood Jan 92; Update 93
 O'Connor, Sandra Day Jul 92
 Thomas, Clarence Jan 92
surfer
 Beachley, Layne Sport V.9
Suzuki, Shinichi Sep 98
Swanson, Janese Science V.4
Swedish
 Lidstrom, Nicklas Sep 03
 Lindgren, Astrid Author V.13
 Sorenstam, Annika Sport V.6
swimming
 Evans, Janet Jan 95; Update 96
 Thompson, Jenny Sport V.5
 Van Dyken, Amy Sport V.3; Update 00

Swiss

Ammann, Simon Sport V.8

Swoopes, Sheryl Sport V.2

Taiwanese

Ho, David Science V.6

Tan, Amy Author V.9

Tanzanian

Nyerere, Julius Kambarage . . . WorLdr V.2;
Update 99

Tarbox, Katie Author V.10

Tartakovsky, Genndy Author V.11

Tartar

Nureyev, Rudolph Apr 93

Tarter, Jill Science V.8

Tarvin, Herbert Apr 97

Taylor, Mildred D. Author V.1;
Update 02

Taymor, Julie PerfArt V.1

teachers

see educators

television

Alba, Jessica Sep 01

Allen, Tim Apr 94; Update 99

Alley, Kirstie Jul 92

Amanpour, Christiane Jan 01

Anderson, Gillian Jan 97

Aniston, Jennifer Apr 99

Arnold, Roseanne Oct 92

Attenborough, David Science V.4

Banks, Tyra PerfArt V.2

Bergen, Candice Sep 93

Bialik, Mayim Jan 94

Blanchard, Rachel Apr 97

Bledel, Alexis Jan 03

Brandis, Jonathan Sep 95

Brandy Apr 96

Bryan, Zachery Ty Jan 97

Burke, Chris Sep 93

Burns, Ken Jan 95

Bynes, Amanda Sep 03

Cameron, Candace Apr 95

Campbell, Neve Apr 98

Candy, John Sep 94

Carter, Chris Author V.4

Carvey, Dana Jan 93

Chung, Connie Jan 94; Update 95;
Update 96

Clarkson, Kelly Jan 03

Cosby, Bill Jan 92

Cousteau, Jacques Jan 93

Crawford, Cindy Apr 93

Crichton, Michael Author V.5

Daly, Carson Apr 00

Doherty, Shannen Apr 92; Update 94

Duchovny, David Apr 96

Duff, Hilary Sep 02

Ellerbe, Linda Apr 94

Fuentes, Daisy Jan 94

Garth, Jennie Apr 96

Gellar, Sarah Michelle Jan 99

Gilbert, Sara Apr 93

Goldberg, Whoopi Apr 94

Goodman, John Sep 95

Groening, Matt Jan 92

Gumbel, Bryant Apr 97

Guy, Jasmine Sep 93

Hart, Melissa Joan Jan 94

Hewitt, Jennifer Love Sep 00

Holmes, Katie Jan 00

Hunter-Gault, Charlayne Jan 00

Irwin, Steve Science V.7

Jennings, Peter Jul 92

Jones, Quincy PerfArt V.2

Leno, Jay Jul 92

Letterman, David Jan 95

Lewis, Shari Jan 99

Limbaugh, Rush Sep 95; Update 02

Locklear, Heather Jan 95

López, George PerfArt V.2

Mac, Bernie PerfArt V.1

Madden, John Sep 97

Muniz, Frankie Jan 01

Nye, Bill Science V.2

O'Donnell, Rosie Apr 97; Update 02

Oleynik, Larisa Sep 96

Olsen, Ashley Sep 95

Olsen, Mary Kate Sep 95

Pauley, Jane Oct 92

Perry, Luke Jan 92

Priestley, Jason Apr 92

Probst, Jeff Jan 01

Roberts, Cokie Apr 95

Sagan, Carl Science V.1

Seinfeld, Jerry Oct 92; Update 98

Shatner, William Apr 95

Siskel, Gene Sep 99

Smith, Will Sep 94

Soren, Tabitha Jan 97

Stewart, Patrick Jan 94

Tartakovsky, Genndy Author V.11

Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber Jan 96

Thomas, Jonathan Taylor Apr 95

- Vidal, Christina PerfArt V.1
 Walters, Barbara Sep 94
 Watson, Barry Sep 02
 Wayans, Keenen Ivory Jan 93
 Whedon, Joss Author V.9
 White, Jaleel Jan 96
 Williams, Robin Apr 92
 Williamson, Kevin Author V.6
 Winfrey, Oprah Apr 92; Update 00
 Zamora, Pedro Apr 95
- tennis**
 Agassi, Andre Jul 92
 Ashe, Arthur Sep 93
 Capriati, Jennifer Sport V.6
 Davenport, Lindsay Sport V.5
 Evert, Chris Sport V.1
 Graf, Steffi Jan 92; Update 01
 Hingis, Martina Sport V.2
 Navratilova, Martina Jan 93; Update 94
 Roddick, Andy Jan 03
 Sampras, Pete Jan 97; Update 02
 Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa Sport V.1
 Seles, Monica Jan 96
 Williams, Serena Sport V.4; Update 00;
 Update 02
 Williams, Venus Jan 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
- Tenzin Gyatso**
see Dalai Lama Sep 98
- Teresa, Mother** Apr 98
- Thampy, George** Sep 00
- Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber** Jan 96
- Thomas, Clarence** Jan 92
- Thomas, Dave** Apr 96; Update 02
- Thomas, Jonathan Taylor** Apr 95
- Thomas, Lewis** Apr 94
- Thompson, Jenny** Sport V.5
- Tibetan**
 Dalai Lama Sep 98
- Timberlake, Justin**
see *N Sync Jan 01
- Tolan, Stephanie S.** Author V.14
- Tolkien, J.R.R.** Jan 02
- Tompkins, Douglas** WorLdr V.3
- Toro, Natalia** Sep 99
- track**
 Bailey, Donovan Sport V.2
 Devers, Gail Sport V.2
 Dragila, Stacy Sport V.6
 Griffith Joyner, Florence Sport V.1;
 Update 98
- Freeman, Cathy Jan 01
 Johnson, Michael Jan 97; Update 00
 Jones, Marion Sport V.5
 Joyner-Kersee, Jackie Oct 92; Update
 96; Update 97; Update 98
 Lewis, Carl Sep 96; Update 97
 Rudolph, Wilma Apr 95
 Runyan, Marla Apr 02
- Travers, P.L.** Author V.2
- triathlon**
 Smyers, Karen Sport V.4
- Trinidadian**
 Guy, Rosa Author V.9
- Tubman, William V. S.** WorLdr V.2
- Tucker, Chris** Jan 01
- Tuttle, Merlin** Apr 97
- Twain, Shania** Apr 99
- Uchida, Mitsuko** Apr 99
- Ugandan**
 Amin, Idi WorLdr V.2
- Ukrainians**
 Baiul, Oksana Apr 95
 Stern, Isaac PerfArt V.1
- United Nations**
 – **Ambassadors to**
 Albright, Madeleine Apr 97
 Bush, George Jan 92
 – **Secretaries General**
 Annan, Kofi Jan 98; Update 01
 Boutros-Ghali, Boutros Apr 93;
 Update 98
- United States**
 – **Attorney General**
 Reno, Janet Sep 93; Update 98
 – **Centers for Disease Control**
 Gayle, Helene Science V.8
 – **First Ladies**
 Bush, Barbara Jan 92
 Bush, Laura Apr 03
 Clinton, Hillary Rodham Apr 93;
 Update 94; Update 95; Update 96; Update
 99; Update 00; Update 01
 – **Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman**
 Powell, Colin Jan 92; Update 93;
 Update 95; Update 01
 – **National Institutes of Health**
 Collins, Francis Science V.6
 Fauci, Anthony S. Science V.7
 Healy, Bernadine Science V.1;
 Update 01

- **National Security Advisor**
Rice, Condoleezza Apr 02
- **Nuclear Regulatory Commission**
Jackson, Shirley Ann. Science V.2
- **Presidents**
Bush, George Jan 92
Bush, George W. Sep 00; Update 00;
Update 01; Update 02
Carter, Jimmy. Apr 95; Update 02
Clinton, Bill Jul 92; Update 94;
Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update
98; Update 99; Update 00; Update 01
Nixon, Richard. Sep 94
- **Secretary of Commerce**
Brown, Ron Sep 96
- **Secretary of Defense**
Cheney, Dick Jan 02
- **Secretary of Housing and
Urban Development**
Cisneros, Henry. Sep 93
- **Secretary of Interior**
Babbitt, Bruce Jan 94
- **Secretary of Labor**
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford Jul 92;
Update 96; Update 99
- **Secretaries of State**
Albright, Madeleine Apr 97
Baker, James. Oct 92
- **Secretary of Transportation**
Dole, Elizabeth Jul 92; Update 96;
Update 99
- **Secretary of Treasury**
Baker, James. Oct 92
- **Senate Majority Leader**
Dole, Bob. Jan 96; Update 96
- **Speaker of the House of
Representatives**
Gingrich, Newt. Apr 95; Update 99
- **Supreme Court Justices**
Blackmun, Harry Jan 00
Burger, Warren Sep 95
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader Jan 94
Marshall, Thurgood Jan 92; Update 93
O'Connor, Sandra Day. Jul 92
Thomas, Clarence. Jan 92
- **Surgeons General**
Carmona, Richard Science V.8
Novello, Antonia. Apr 92; Update 93
Satcher, David Sep 98
- **Vice-Presidents**
Bush, George Jan 92
Cheney, Dick Jan 02
Gore, Al Jan 93; Update 96;
Update 97; Update 98; Update 99; Up-
date 00; Update 01
Nixon, Richard. Sep 94
- Usher. PerfArt V.1**
- Van Allsburg, Chris Apr 92**
- Van Draanen, Wendelin. Author V.11**
- Van Dyken, Amy. Sport V.3; Update 00**
- Van Meter, Vicki Jan 95**
- Vasan, Nina Science V.7**
- Ventura, Jesse Apr 99; Update 02**
- Vernon, Mike. Jan 98; Update 02**
- veterinarians**
Herriot, James Author V.1
Spelman, Lucy Science V.6
- Vice-Presidents**
Bush, George Jan 92
Cheney, Dick Jan 02
Gore, Al Jan 93; Update 96;
Update 97; Update 98; Update 99; Update
00; Update 01
Nixon, Richard Sep 94
- Vick, Michael. Sport V.9**
- Vidal, Christina PerfArt V.1**
- Villa-Komaroff, Lydia Science V.6**
- Vincent, Mark**
see Diesel, Vin. Jan 03
- Voigt, Cynthia Oct 92**
- volleyball**
Kiraly, Karch Sport V.4
- Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. Author V.1**
- Wa, Ka Hsaw**
see Ka Hsaw Wa. WorLdr V.3
- Walters, Barbara. Sep 94**
- Wang, An. Science V.2**
- Ward, Charlie Apr 94**
- Ward, Lloyd D. Jan 01**
- Warhol, Andy. Artist V.1**
- Warner, Kurt. Sport V.4**
- Warrick, Earl. Science V.8**
- Washington, Denzel Jan 93; Update 02**
- Watson, Barry Sep 02**
- Watson, Emma Apr 03**
- Watson, James D. Science V.1**
- Watson, Paul WorLdr V.1**
- Watterson, Bill. Jan 92**
- Wayans, Keenen Ivory Jan 93**
- Webb, Alan. Sep 01**
- Webb, Karrie. Sport V.5; Update 01;
Update 02**

- Weinke, Chris** Apr 01
Werbach, Adam WorLdr V.1
Whedon, Joss Author V.9
White, E.B. Author V.1
White, Jaleel Jan 96
White, Reggie Jan 98
White, Ruth Author V.11
Whitstone, Heather Apr 95; Update 02
Whitman, Meg Sep 03
Wilder, Laura Ingalls Author V.3
WilderBrathwaite, Gloria Science V.7
Williams, Garth Author V.2
Williams, Michelle
see *Destiny's Child* Apr 01
Williams, Robin Apr 92
Williams, Serena Sport V.4; Update 00;
 Update 02
Williams, Ted Sport V.9
Williams, Venus Jan 99; Update 00;
 Update 01; Update 02
Williamson, Kevin Author V.6
Willingham, Tyrone Sep 02
Wilson, August Author V.4
Wilson, Edward O. Science V.8
Wilson, Mara Jan 97
Winans, CeCe Apr 00
Winfield, Dave Jan 93
Winfrey, Oprah Apr 92; Update 00
Winslet, Kate Sep 98
Witherspoon, Reese Apr 03
Wojtyla, Karol Josef
see *John Paul II* Oct 92; Update 94;
 Update 95
Wolf, Hazel WorLdr V.3
Wolff, Virginia Euwer Author V.13
Wood, Elijah Apr 02
Woods, Tiger Sport V.1; Update 00;
 Sport V.6
Woodson, Jacqueline Author V.7;
 Update 01
World Wide Web
see *Internet*
Wortis, Avi
see *Avi* Jan 93
Wozniak, Steve Science V.5
Wrede, Patricia C. Author V.7
wrestling
 Hogan, Hulk Apr 92
 Ventura, Jesse Apr 99; Update 02
Wright, Frank Lloyd Artist V.1
Wright, Richard Author V.5
Yamaguchi, Kristi Apr 92
Yao Ming Sep 03
Yelas, Jay Sport V.9
Yeltsin, Boris Apr 92; Update 93;
 Update 95; Update 96; Update 98; Update 00
Yep, Laurence Author V.5
Yolen, Jane Author V.7
Young, Steve Jan 94; Update 00
Yzerman, Steve Sport V.2
Zairian
 Mobutu Sese Seko WorLdr V.2;
 Update 97
Zambian
 Kaunda, Kenneth WorLdr V.2
Zamora, Pedro Apr 95
Zimbabwean
 Mugabe, Robert WorLdr V.2
Zindel, Paul Author V.1; Update 02
Zirkle, Aliy Sport V.6
Zmeskal, Kim Jan 9

Places of Birth Index

The following index lists the places of birth for the individuals profiled in *Biography Today*. Places of birth are entered under state, province, and/or country.

Alabama

- Aaron, Hank – *Mobile* Sport V.1
- Allen, Tori – *Auburn* Sport V.9
- Barkley, Charles – *Leeds* Apr 92
- Flowers, Vonetta – *Birmingham* . . Sport V.8
- Fuller, Millard – *Lanett* Apr 03
- Hamm, Mia – *Selma* Sport V.2
- Hurston, Zora Neale
– *Notasulga* Author V.6
- Jackson, Bo – *Bessemer* Jan 92
- Jemison, Mae – *Decatur* Oct 92
- Johnson, Angela – *Tuskegee* Author V.6
- Johnson, Lonnie – *Mobile* Science V.4
- Lee, Harper – *Monroeville* Author V.9
- Lewis, Carl – *Birmingham* Sep 96
- Lewis, John – *Pike County* Jan 03
- Parks, Rosa – *Tuskegee* Apr 92
- Rice, Condoleezza – *Birmingham* . . Apr 02
- Satcher, David – *Anniston* Sep 98
- Whitstone, Heather – *Dothan* Apr 95
- Wilson, Edward O.
– *Birmingham* Science V.8

Alaska

- Brooks, Vincent – *Anchorage* Sep 03

Algeria

- Boulmerka, Hassiba
– *Constantine* Sport V.1

Angola

- Savimbi, Jonas – *Munhango* . . . WorLdr V.2

Arizona

- Chavez, Cesar – *Yuma* Sep 93
- Chavez, Julz – *Yuma* Sep 02
- Farmer, Nancy – *Phoenix* Author V.6
- Morrison, Sam – *Flagstaff* Sep 97
- Murray, Ty – *Phoenix* Sport V.7
- Strug, Kerri – *Tucson* Sep 96

Arkansas

- Bates, Daisy – *Huttig* Apr 00
- Clinton, Bill – *Hope* Jul 92

- Clinton, Chelsea – *Little Rock* Apr 96
- Grisham, John – *Jonesboro* Author V.1
- Johnson, John – *Arkansas City* Jan 97
- Pippen, Scottie – *Hamburg* Oct 92

Australia

- Beachley, Layne – *Sydney* Sport V.9
- Freeman, Cathy – *Mackay,*
Queensland Jan 01
- Irwin, Steve – *Victoria* Science V.7
- Norman, Greg – *Mt. Isa, Queensland* Jan 94
- Travers, P.L. – *Maryborough,*
Queensland Author V.2
- Webb, Karrie – *Ayr, Queensland* . . Sport V.5

Bosnia-Herzegovina

- Filipovic, Zlata – *Sarajevo* Sep 94

Brazil

- da Silva, Fabiola – *Sao Paulo* Sport V.9
- Mendes, Chico – *Xapuri, Acre* . . WorLdr V.1
- Pelé – *Tres Coracoes,*
Minas Gerais Sport V.1

Bulgaria

- Christo – *Gabrovo* Sep 96

Burma

- Aung San Suu Kyi – *Rangoon* Apr 96
- Ka Hsaw Wa – *Rangoon* WorLdr V.3

California

- Abdul, Paula – *Van Nuys* Jan 92
- Adams, Ansel – *San Francisco* Artist V.1
- Affleck, Ben – *Berkeley* Sep 99
- Aikman, Troy – *West Covina* Apr 95
- Alba, Jessica – *Pomona* Sep 01
- Allen, Marcus – *San Diego* Sep 97
- Alvarez, Luis W. – *San*
Francisco Science V.3
- Aniston, Jennifer – *Sherman Oaks* . . Apr 99
- Babbitt, Bruce – *Los Angeles* Jan 94
- Bahrke, Shannon – *Tahoe City* . . . Sport V.8
- Banks, Tyra – *Los Angeles* PerfArt V.2
- Barrymore, Drew – *Los Angeles* Jan 01
- Bergen, Candice – *Beverly Hills* Sep 93

PLACES OF BIRTH INDEX

- Bialik, Mayim – *San Diego* Jan 94
 Bonds, Barry – *Riverside* Jan 03
 Brady, Tom – *San Mateo* Sport V.7
 Breathed, Berke – *Encino* Jan 92
 Brower, David – *Berkeley* WorLdr V.1
 Bynes, Amanda – *Thousand Oaks* . . . Sep 03
 Cameron, Candace Apr 95
 Carter, Chris – *Bellflower* Author V.4
 Chastain, Brandi – *San Jose* Sport V.4
 Coolio – *Los Angeles* Sep 96
 Dakides, Tara – *Mission Viejo* Sport V.7
 Davenport, Lindsay
 – *Palos Verdes* Sport V.5
 DiCaprio, Leonardo – *Hollywood* . . . Apr 98
 Dragila, Stacy – *Auburn* Sport V.6
 Evans, Janet – *Fullerton* Jan 95
 Fernandez, Lisa – *Long Beach* Sport V.5
 Fielder, Cecil – *Los Angeles* Sep 93
 Fields, Debbi – *East Oakland* Jan 96
 Fossey, Dian – *San Francisco* Science V.1
 Freedman, Russell
 – *San Francisco* Author V.14
 Garcia, Jerry – *San Francisco* Jan 96
 Gilbert, Sara – *Santa Monica* Apr 93
 Gordon, Jeff – *Vallejo* Apr 99
 Griffith Joyner, Florence – *Los Angeles* Sport V.1
 Hammer – *Oakland* Jan 92
 Hanks, Tom – *Concord* Jan 96
 Hawk, Tony – *San Diego* Apr 01
 Jackson, Shirley – *San Francisco* . . . Author V.6
 Jobs, Steven – *San Francisco* Jan 92;
 Science V.5
 Johnson, Johanna Apr 00
 Johnson, Randy – *Walnut Creek* . . . Sport V.9
 Jones, Marion – *Los Angeles* Sport V.5
 Kidd, Jason – *San Francisco* Sport V.9
 Kistler, Darci – *Riverside* Jan 93
 Kwan, Michelle – *Torrance* Sport V.3
 LaDuke, Winona – *Los Angeles* . . . WorLdr V.3
 Lasseter, John – *Hollywood* Sep 00
 Le Guin, Ursula K. – *Berkeley* Author V.8
 LeMond, Greg – *Los Angeles* Sport V.1
 Locklear, Heather – *Los Angeles* Jan 95
 López, George – *Mission Hills* . . . PerfArt V.2
 Lucas, George – *Modesto* Apr 97
 Mathison, Melissa Author V.4
 McGwire, Mark – *Pomona* Jan 99
 Moceanu, Dominique – *Hollywood* . . Jan 98
 Nixon, Joan Lowery – *Los Angeles* Author V.1
 Nixon, Richard – *Yorba Linda* Sep 94
 Ochoa, Ellen – *Los Angeles* Apr 01
 O'Dell, Scott – *Terminal Island* . . . Author V.2
 Oleynik, Larisa – *San Francisco* Sep 96
 Olsen, Ashley Sep 95
 Olsen, Mary Kate Sep 95
 Prinze, Freddie, Jr. – *Los Angeles* . . . Apr 00
 Ride, Sally – *Encino* Jan 92
 Runyan, Marla – *Santa Maria* Apr 02
 Ryan, Pam Muñoz –
 Bakersfield Author V.12
 Snicket, Lemony
 – *San Francisco* Author V.12
 Soto, Gary – *Fresno* Author V.5
 Stachowski, Richie Science V.3
 Stefani, Gwen – *Fullerton* Sep 03
 Swanson, Janese – *San Diego* Science V.4
 Tan, Amy – *Oakland* Author V.9
 Thiessen, Tiffini-Amber – *Modesto* . . . Jan 96
 Werbach, Adam – *Tarzana* WorLdr V.1
 White, Jaleel – *Los Angeles* Jan 96
 Williams, Ted – *San Diego* Sport V.9
 Williams, Venus – *Lynwood* Jan 99
 Wilson, Mara – *Burbank* Jan 97
 Woods, Tiger – *Long Beach* Sport V.1,
 Sport V.6
 Wozniak, Steve – *San Jose* Science V.5
 Yamaguchi, Kristi – *Fremont* Apr 92
 Yep, Laurence – *San Francisco* . . . Author V.5
- Canada**
 Blanchard, Rachel – *Toronto, Ontario* Apr 97
 Campbell, Neve – *Toronto, Ontario* . . Apr 98
 Candy, John – *Newmarket, Ontario* . . Sep 94
 Carrey, Jim – *Newmarket, Ontario* . . . Apr 96
 Dion, Celine – *Charlemagne, Quebec* . Sep 97
 Gretzky, Wayne – *Brantford, Ontario* Jan 92
 Howe, Gordie – *Floral, Saskatchewan* Sport V.2
 Jennings, Peter – *Toronto, Ontario* . . . Jul 92
 Johnston, Lynn – *Collingwood, Ontario* Jan 99
 Kielburger, Craig – *Toronto, Ontario* . . Jan 00
 lang, k.d. – *Edmonton, Alberta* Sep 93
 Lavigne, Avril – *Belleville, Ontario* PerfArt V.2
 Lemieux, Mario – *Montreal, Quebec* . . Jul 92
 Martin, Bernard – *Petty Harbor, Newfoundland* WorLdr V.3
 Messier, Mark – *Edmonton, Alberta* . . Apr 96
 Morissette, Alanis – *Ottawa, Ontario* Apr 97
 Mowat, Farley – *Belleville, Ontario* Author V.8

- Priestley, Jason – *Vancouver, British Columbia* Apr 92
- Roy, Patrick – *Quebec City, Quebec* Sport V.7
- Sakic, Joe – *Burnbary, British Columbia* Sport V.6
- Shatner, William – *Montreal, Quebec* Apr 95
- Twain, Shania – *Windsor, Ontario* . . . Apr 99
- Vernon, Mike – *Calgary, Alberta* Jan 98
- Watson, Paul – *Toronto, Ontario* . WorLdr V.1
- Wolf, Hazel – *Victoria, British Columbia* WorLdr V.3
- Yzerman, Steve – *Cranbrook, British Columbia* Sport V.2
- China**
- Chan, Jackie – *Hong Kong* PerfArt V.1
- Dai Qing – *Chongqing* WorLdr V.3
- Fu Mingxia – *Wuhan* Sport V.5
- Lucid, Shannon – *Shanghai* Science V.2
- Paterson, Katherine – *Qing Jiang, Jiangsu* Author 97
- Pei, I.M. – *Canton* Artist V.1
- Wang, An – *Shanghai* Science V.2
- Yao Ming – *Shanghai* Sep 03
- Colombia**
- Ocampo, Adriana C. – *Barranquilla* Science V.8
- Shakira – *Barranquilla* PerfArt V.1
- Colorado**
- Allen, Tim – *Denver* Apr 94
- Bryan, Zachery Ty – *Aurora* Jan 97
- Dunlap, Alison – *Denver* Sport V.7
- Handler, Ruth – *Denver* Apr 98
- Klug, Chris – *Vail* Sport V.8
- Patterson, Ryan – *Grand Junction* Science V.7
- Romero, John – *Colorado Springs* Science V.8
- Stachowski, Richie – *Denver* Science V.3
- Toro, Natalia – *Boulder* Sep 99
- Van Dyken, Amy – *Englewood* Sport V.3
- Connecticut**
- Brandis, Jonathan – *Danbury* Sep 95
- Bush, George W. – *New Haven* Sep 00
- dePaola, Tomie – *Meriden* Author V.5
- Land, Edwin – *Bridgeport* Science V.1
- Leibovitz, Annie – *Waterbury* Sep 96
- Lobo, Rebecca – *Hartford* Sport V.3
- McClintock, Barbara – *Hartford* Oct 92
- Shea, Jim, Jr. – *Hartford* Sport V.8
- Spelman, Lucy – *Bridgeport* Science V.6
- Spock, Benjamin – *New Haven* Sep 95
- Tarbox, Katie – *New Canaan* Author V.10
- Cuba**
- Castro, Fidel – *Mayari, Oriente* Jul 92
- Estefan, Gloria – *Havana* Jul 92
- Fuentes, Daisy – *Havana* Jan 94
- Hernandez, Livan – *Villa Clara* Apr 98
- Zamora, Pedro Apr 95
- Czechoslovakia**
- Albright, Madeleine – *Prague* Apr 97
- Hasek, Dominik – *Pardubice* Sport V.3
- Hingis, Martina – *Kosice* Sport V.2
- Jagr, Jaromir – *Kladno* Sport V.5
- Navratilova, Martina – *Prague* Jan 93
- Delaware**
- Heimlich, Henry – *Wilmington* Science V.6
- Dominican Republic**
- Martinez, Pedro – *Manoguayabo* Sport V.5
- Sosa, Sammy – *San Pedro de Macoris* Jan 99
- Egypt**
- Arafat, Yasir – *Cairo* Sep 94
- Boutros-Ghali, Boutros – *Cairo* Apr 93
- Sadat, Anwar – *Mit Abu al-Kum* WorLdr V.2
- England**
- Almond, David – *Newcastle* Author V.10
- Amanpour, Christiane – *London* Jan 01
- Attenborough, David – *London* Science V.4
- Barton, Hazel – *Bristol* Science V.6
- Berners-Lee, Tim – *London* Science V.7
- Diana, Princess of Wales – *Norfolk* Jul 92; Jan 98
- Goodall, Jane – *London* Science V.1
- Handford, Martin – *London* Jan 92
- Hargreaves, Alison – *Belper* Jan 96
- Hawking, Stephen – *Oxford* Apr 92
- Herriot, James – *Sunderland* Author V.1
- Jacques, Brian – *Liverpool* Author V.5
- Leakey, Mary – *London* Science V.1
- Macaulay, David – *Burton-on-Trent* Author V.2
- Moore, Henry – *Castleford* Artist V.1
- Pottter, Beatrix – *London* Author V.8
- Pullman, Philip – *Norwich* Author V.9
- Radcliffe, Daniel – *London* Jan 02
- Reid Banks, Lynne – *London* Author V.2
- Rennison, Louise – *Leeds* Author V.10
- Rowling, J. K. – *Bristol* Sep 99
- Sacks, Oliver – *London* Science V.3

PLACES OF BIRTH INDEX

- Stewart, Patrick – *Mirfield* Jan 94
 Winslet, Kate – *Reading* Sep 98
- Ethiopia**
 Haile Selassie – *Ejarsa Goro, Harar* WorLdr V.2
 Roba, Fatuma – *Bokeji* Sport V.3
- Florida**
 Carter, Aaron – *Tampa* Sep 02
 Carter, Vince – *Daytona Beach* Sport V.5
 Dorough, Howie – *Orlando* Jan 00
 Evert, Chris – *Ft. Lauderdale* Sport V.1
 Griese, Brian – *Miami* Jan 02
 McLean, A.J. – *West Palm Beach* Jan 00
 Reno, Janet – *Miami* Sep 93
 Richardson, Dot – *Orlando* Sport V.2
 Robinson, David – *Key West* Sep 96
 Rubin, Jamie – *Fort Myers* Science V.8
 Sanders, Deion – *Ft. Myers* Sport V.1
 Sapp, Warren – *Plymouth* Sport V.5
 Smith, Emmitt – *Pensacola* Sep 94
 Tarvin, Herbert – *Miami* Apr 97
- France**
 Córdova, France – *Paris* Science V.7
 Cousteau, Jacques – *St. Andre-de-Cubzac* Jan 93
 Ma, Yo-Yo – *Paris* Jul 92
 Marceau, Marcel – *Strasbourg* PerfArt V.2
- Georgia**
 Carter, Jimmy – *Plains* Apr 95
 Grant, Amy – *Augusta* Jan 95
 Hogan, Hulk – *Augusta* Apr 92
 Johns, Jasper – *Augusta* Artist V.1
 Lee, Spike – *Atlanta* Apr 92
 Mathis, Clint – *Conyers* Apr 03
 Roberts, Julia – *Atlanta* Sep 01
 Robinson, Jackie – *Cairo* Sport V.3
 Rowland, Kelly – *Atlanta* Apr 01
 Thomas, Clarence – *Pin Point* Jan 92
 Tucker, Chris – *Decatur* Jan 01
 Ward, Charlie – *Thomasville* Apr 94
- Germany**
 Bethe, Hans A. – *Strassburg* Science V.3
 Frank, Anne – *Frankfort* Author V.4
 Galdikas, Biruté – *Wiesbaden* Science V.4
 Graf, Steffi – *Mannheim* Jan 92
 Otto, Sylke – *Karl-Marx Stad (Chemnitz)* Sport V.8
 Pippig, Uta – *Berlin* Sport V.1
- Ghana**
 Annan, Kofi – *Kumasi* Jan 98
 Nkrumah, Kwame – *Nkrofro* WorLdr V.2
- Guatemala**
 Menchu, Rigoberta – *Chimel, El Quiche* Jan 93
- Haiti**
 Aristide, Jean-Bertrand – *Port-Salut* Jan 95
- Hawaii**
 Case, Steve – *Honolulu* Science V.5
 Lowry, Lois – *Honolulu* Author V.4
 Nakamura, Leanne – *Honolulu* Apr 02
 Tuttle, Merlin – *Honolulu* Apr 97
 Yelas, Jay – *Honolulu* Sport V.9
- Holland**
 Lionni, Leo – *Watergraafsmeer* Author V.6
- Hungary**
 Erdős, Paul – *Budapest* Science V.2
- Idaho**
 Street, Picabo – *Triumph* Sport V.3
- Illinois**
 Anderson, Gillian – *Chicago* Jan 97
 Bauer, Joan – *River Forest* Author V.10
 Blackmun, Harry – *Nashville* Jan 00
 Blum, Deborah – *Urbana* Science V.8
 Boyd, Candy Dawson – *Chicago* Author V.3
 Bradbury, Ray – *Waukegan* Author V.3
 Clinton, Hillary Rodham – *Chicago* Apr 93
 Crawford, Cindy – *De Kalb* Apr 93
 Crichton, Michael – *Chicago* Author V.5
 Cushman, Karen – *Chicago* Author V.5
 Ford, Harrison – *Chicago* Sep 97
 Garth, Jennie – *Urbana* Apr 96
 Gorey, Edward – *Chicago* Author V.13
 Granato, Cammi – *Downers Grove* Sport V.8
 Greenburg, Dan – *Chicago* Author V.14
 Hansberry, Lorraine – *Chicago* Author V.5
 Hendrickson, Sue – *Chicago* Science V.7
 Jones, Quincy – *Chicago* PerfArt V.2
 Joyner-Kersee, Jackie – *East St. Louis* Oct 92
 Mac, Bernie – *Chicago* PerfArt V.1
 Margulis, Lynn – *Chicago* Sep 96
 McCully, Emily Arnold – *Galesburg* Jul 92
 McGruder, Aaron – *Chicago* Author V.10
 McNabb, Donovan – *Chicago* Apr 03
 Park, Linda Sue – *Urbana* Author V.12
 Peck, Richard – *Decatur* Author V.10
 Silverstein, Shel – *Chicago* Author V.3
 Siskel, Gene – *Chicago* Sep 99
 Van Draanen, Wendelin – *Chicago* Author V.11

- Watson, James D. – *Chicago* . . . Science V.1
 Williams, Michelle – *Rockford* Apr 01
 Wrede, Patricia C. – *Chicago* . . . Author V.7
- Indiana**
 Bird, Larry – *West Baden* Jan 92
 Cabot, Meg – *Bloomington* Author V.12
 Davis, Jim – *Marion*. Author V.1
 Letterman, David – *Indianapolis*. . . . Jan 95
 Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds – *Anderson* Apr 93
 Pauley, Jane – *Indianapolis*. Oct 92
 Peet, Bill – *Grandview* Author V.4
 Stewart, Tony – *Rushville*. Sport V.9
 Vonnegut, Kurt – *Indianapolis* . . Author V.1
- Iowa**
 Benson, Mildred – *Ladora* Jan 03
 Leopold, Aldo – *Burlington* WorLdr V.3
 Warner, Kurt – *Burlington* Sport V.4
 Wood, Elijah – *Cedar Rapids* Apr 02
- Iraq**
 Hussein, Saddam – *al-Auja* Jul 92
- Ireland, Northern**
 Lewis, C. S. – *Belfast* Author V.3
- Ireland, Republic of**
 Colfer, Eoin – *Wexford* Author V.13
 Flannery, Sarah – *Blarney, County Cork* Science V.5
 Robinson, Mary – *Ballina*. Sep 93
- Israel**
 Perlman, Itzhak – *Tel Aviv* Jan 95
 Portman, Natalie – *Jerusalem* Sep 99
 Rabin, Yitzhak – *Jerusalem* Oct 92
- Italy**
 Andretti, Mario – *Montona*. Sep 94
 Krim, Mathilde – *Como* Science V.1
 Levi-Montalcini, Rita – *Turin* . . Science V.1
- Jamaica**
 Ashley, Maurice – *St. Andrew* Sep 99
 Bailey, Donovan – *Manchester* . . . Sport V.2
 Denton, Sandi – *Kingston*. Apr 95
 Ewing, Patrick – *Kingston* Jan 95
 Maxwell, Jody-Anne – *St. Andrew* . . Sep 98
- Japan**
 Miyamoto, Shigeru – *Sonobe* . . . Science V.5
 Morita, Akio – *Kasugaya* Science V.4
 Suzuki, Shinichi – *Nagoya* Sep 98
 Uchida, Mitsuko – *Tokyo* Apr 99
- Jordan**
 Hussein, King – *Amman*. Apr 99
- Kansas**
 Alley, Kirstie – *Wichita*. Jul 92
 Ballard, Robert – *Wichita* Science V.4
- Brooks, Gwendolyn – *Topeka*. . . Author V.3
 Dole, Bob – *Russell*. Jan 96
 Parks, Gordon – *Fort Scott*. Artist V.1
 Patrick, Ruth Science V.3
 Probst, Jeff – *Wichita* Jan 01
 Sanders, Barry – *Wichita* Sep 95
 Stiles, Jackie – *Kansas City*. Sport V.6
- Kentucky**
 Ali, Muhammad – *Louisville* Sport V.2
 Littrell, Brian – *Lexington*. Jan 00
 Monroe, Bill – *Rosine* Sep 97
 Morgan, Garrett – *Paris*. Science V.2
 Richardson, Kevin – *Lexington* Jan 00
- Kenya**
 Leakey, Louis – *Nairobi* Science V.1
 Kenyatta, Jomo – *Ngenda* WorLdr V.2
 Maathai, Wangari – *Nyeri*. WorLdr V.1
 Ndeti, Cosmas – *Machakos* Sep 95
- Liberia**
 Tubman, William V. S.
 – *Harper City* WorLdr V.2
- Libya**
 Qaddafi, Muammar Apr 97
- Louisiana**
 Dumars, Joe – *Natchitoches* Sport V.3
 Gumbel, Bryant – *New Orleans* Apr 97
 Kapell, Dave – *Leesville* Science V.8
 Manning, Peyton – *New Orleans* Sep 00
 Marsalis, Wynton – *New Orleans* . . . Apr 92
 Rice, Anne – *New Orleans*. Author V.3
 Roberts, Cokie – *New Orleans* Apr 95
 Spears, Britney – *Kentwood* Jan 01
 Stewart, Kordell – *Marrero*. Sep 98
 Witherspoon, Reese – *New Orleans* . . Apr 03
- Macedonia**
 Teresa, Mother – *Skopje*. Apr 98
- Maine**
 King, Stephen – *Portland* Author V.1
- Malawi**
 Banda, Hastings Kamuzu
 – *Chiwengo, Nyasaland* WorLdr V.2
- Maryland**
 Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia
 – *Silver Spring*. Author V.8
 Collier, Bryan – *Salisbury* Author V.11
 Hesse, Karen – *Baltimore* Author V.5
 Marshall, Thurgood – *Baltimore*. Jan 92
 Ripken, Cal, Jr. – *Havre de Grace*. . Sport V.1
 Sleator, William
 – *Havre de Grace*. Author V.11
 Stepanek, Mattie – *Upper Marlboro* . . Apr 02

PLACES OF BIRTH INDEX

Massachusetts

- Bush, George – *Milton* Jan 92
 Butcher, Susan – *Cambridge* Sport V.1
 Caplan, Arthur – *Boston* Science V.6
 Cormier, Robert – *Leominister* Author V.1
 Fanning, Shawn – *Brockton* Science V.5
 Gilbert, Walter – *Cambridge* Science V.2
 Grandin, Temple – *Boston* Science V.3
 Guey, Wendy – *Boston* Sep 96
 Guy, Jasmine – *Boston* Sep 93
 Kerrigan, Nancy – *Woburn* Apr 94
 Krakauer, Jon – *Brookline* Author V.6
 Lynch, Chris – *Boston* Author V.13
 Meltzer, Milton – *Worcester* Author V.11
 Pine, Elizabeth Michele – *Boston* Jan 94
 Robison, Emily – *Pittsfield* PerfArt V.1
 Scarry, Richard – *Boston* Sep 94
 Seuss, Dr. – *Springfield* Jan 92
 Sones, Sonya – *Boston* Author V.11
 Speare, Elizabeth George
 – *Melrose* Sep 95
 Taymor, Julie – *Newton* PerfArt V.1
 Thompson, Jenny – *Georgetown* Sport V.5
 Voigt, Cynthia – *Boston* Oct 92
 Walters, Barbara – *Boston* Sep 94

Mexico

- Fox, Vicente – *Mexico City* Apr 03
 Jiménez, Francisco – *San Pedro*,
 Tlaquepaque, Author V.13
 Rivera, Diego – *Guanajuato* Artist V.1

Michigan

- Applegate, K.A. Jan 00
 Askins, Renee WorLdr V.1
 Canady, Alexa – *Lansing* Science V.6
 Carson, Ben – *Detroit* Science V.4
 Curtis, Christopher Paul – *Flint* Author V.4
 Galeczka, Chris – *Sterling Heights* Apr 96
 Johnson, Magic – *Lansing* Apr 92
 Kiraly, Karch – *Jackson* Sport V.4
 Krone, Julie – *Benton Harbor* Jan 95
 Lalas, Alexi – *Royal Oak* Sep 94
 Mohajer, Dineh – *Bloomfield Hills* Jan 02
 Riley, Dawn – *Detroit* Sport V.4
 Scieszka, Jon – *Flint* Author V.9
 Shabazz, Betty – *Detroit* Apr 98
 Small, David – *Detroit* Author V.10
 Van Allsburg, Chris – *Grand Rapids* Apr 92
 Ward, Lloyd D. – *Romulus* Jan 01
 Watson, Barry – *Traverse City* Sep 02
 Webb, Alan – *Ann Arbor* Sep 01

- Williams, Serena – *Saginaw* Sport V.4
 Winans, CeCe – *Detroit* Apr 00

Minnesota

- Burger, Warren – *St. Paul* Sep 95
 Douglas, Marjory Stoneman
 – *Minneapolis* WorLdr V.1
 Hartnett, Josh – *St. Paul* Sep 03
 Madden, John – *Austin* Sep 97
 Mars, Forrest, Sr. – *Minneapolis* Science V.4
 Murie, Olaus J. WorLdr V.1
 Paulsen, Gary – *Minneapolis* Author V.1
 Ryder, Winona – *Winona* Jan 93
 Schulz, Charles – *Minneapolis* Author V.2
 Scurry, Briana – *Minneapolis* Jan 00
 Ventura, Jesse – *Minneapolis* Apr 99
 Weinke, Chris – *St. Paul* Apr 01
 Winfield, Dave – *St. Paul* Jan 93

Mississippi

- Bass, Lance – *Clinton* Jan 01
 Brandy – *McComb* Apr 96
 Favre, Brett – *Gulfport* Sport V.2
 Forman, Michele – *Biloxi* Jan 03
 Hill, Faith – *Jackson* Sep 01
 Jones, James Earl – *Arkabutla*
 Township Jan 95
 McCarty, Oseola – *Wayne County* Jan 99
 Payton, Walter – *Columbia* Jan 00
 Rice, Jerry – *Crawford* Apr 93
 Rimes, LeAnn – *Jackson* Jan 98
 Taylor, Mildred D. – *Jackson* Author V.1
 Winfrey, Oprah – *Kosciusko* Apr 92
 Wright, Richard – *Natchez* Author V.5

Missouri

- Angelou, Maya – *St. Louis* Apr 93
 Champagne, Larry III – *St. Louis* Apr 96
 Eminem – *Kansas City* Apr 03
 Goodman, John – *Afton* Sep 95
 Heinlein, Robert – *Butler* Author V.4
 Hughes, Langston – *Joplin* Author V.7
 Lester, Julius – *St. Louis* Author V.7
 Limbaugh, Rush – *Cape Girardeau* Sep 95
 Miller, Shannon – *Rolla* Sep 94
 Nye, Naomi Shihab – *St. Louis* Author V.8

Montana

- Carvey, Dana – *Missoula* Jan 93
 Horner, Jack – *Shelby* Science V.1
 Lowe, Alex – *Missoula* Sport V.4

Morocco

- Hassan II – *Rabat* WorLdr V.2

Myanmar

- see Burma

Nebraska

- Cheney, Dick – *Lincoln* Jan 02
 Roddick, Andy – *Omaha* Jan 03

Nevada

- Agassi, Andre – *Las Vegas* Jul 92
 Schwikert, Tasha – *Las Vegas* Sport V.7

New Hampshire

- Zirkle, Aliy – *Manchester* Sport V.6

New Jersey

- Blume, Judy Jan 92
 Carpenter, Mary Chapin
 – *Princeton* Sep 94
 Clements, Andrew – *Camden* Author V.13
 Dunst, Kirsten – *Point Pleasant* PerfArt V.1
 Earle, Sylvia – *Gibbstown* Science V.1
 Glover, Savion – *Newark* Apr 99
 Gwaltney, John Langston –
 Orange Science V.3
 Hill, Lauryn – *South Orange* Sep 99
 Houston, Whitney – *Newark* Sep 94
 Ice-T – *Newark* Apr 93
 Jeter, Derek – *Pequannock* Sport V.4
 Lawrence, Jacob – *Atlantic City* Artist V.1
 Love, Susan – *Long Branch* Science V.3
 Martin, Ann M. – *Princeton* Jan 92
 Morrison, Lillian – *Jersey City* Author V.12
 Muniz, Frankie – *Ridgewood* Jan 01
 O’Neal, Shaquille – *Newark* Sep 93
 Pinsky, Robert – *Long Branch* Author V.7
 Queen Latifah – *Newark* Apr 92
 Rodman, Dennis – *Trenton* Apr 96
 Schwarzkopf, H. Norman – *Trenton* Jan 92
 Sinatra, Frank – *Hoboken* Jan 99
 Thomas, Dave – *Atlantic City* Apr 96

New Mexico

- Bezos, Jeff – *Albuquerque* Apr 01
 Foreman, Dave – *Albuquerque* WorLdr V.1
 Huerta, Dolores – *Dawson* Sep 03
 Villa-Komaroff, Lydia –
 Las Vegas Science V.6

New York State

- Aaliyah – *Brooklyn* Jan 02
 Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem
 – *New York City* Sport V.1
 Abzug, Bella – *Bronx* Sep 98
 Aguilera, Christina – *Staten Island* Apr 00
 Anderson, Laurie Halse –
 Potsdam Author V.11
 Ashanti – *Glen Cove* PerfArt V.2
 Avi – *New York City* Jan 93

Baldwin, James

- *New York City* Author V.2
 Bennett, Cherie – *Buffalo* Author V.9
 Bird, Sue – *Syosset* Sport V.9
 Blair, Bonnie – *Cornwall* Apr 94
 Blige, Mary J. – *Yonkers* Apr 02
 Bourke-White, Margaret
 – *New York City* Artist V.1
 Brody, Jane – *Brooklyn* Science V.2
 Brown, Claude
 – *New York City* Author V.12
 Burke, Chris – *New York City* Sep 93
 Burns, Ken – *Brooklyn* Jan 95
 Bush, Barbara – *New York City* Jan 92
 Calderone, Mary S.
 – *New York City* Science V.3
 Capriati, Jennifer – *Long Island* Sport V.6
 Carey, Mariah – *New York City* Apr 96
 Carle, Eric – *Syracuse* Author V.1
 Carmona, Richard
 – *New York City* Science V.8
 Carter, Nick – *Jamestown* Jan 00
 Cohen, Adam Ezra – *New York City* Apr 97
 Collins, Eileen – *Elmira* Science V.4
 Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy)
 – *New York City* Apr 98
 Cooney, Barbara – *Brooklyn* Author V.8
 Cooney, Caroline B. – *Geneva* Author V.4
 Coville, Bruce – *Syracuse* Author V.9
 Cronin, John – *Yonkers* WorLdr V.3
 Culkin, Macaulay – *New York City* Sep 93
 Danes, Claire – *New York City* Sep 97
 de Mille, Agnes – *New York City* Jan 95
 Diesel, Vin – *New York City* Jan 03
 Duchovny, David – *New York City* Apr 96
 Elion, Gertrude
 – *New York City* Science V.6
 Farrakhan, Louis – *Bronx* Jan 97
 Fatone, Joey – *Brooklyn* Jan 01
 Fauci, Anthony S. – *Brooklyn* Science V.7
 Frankenthaler, Helen
 – *New York City* Artist V.1
 Gayle, Helene – *Buffalo* Science V.8
 Gellar, Sarah Michelle
 – *New York City* Jan 99
 Giff, Patricia Reilly – *Queens* Author V.7
 Ginsburg, Ruth Bader – *Brooklyn* Jan 94
 Giuliani, Rudolph – *Brooklyn* Sep 02
 Goldberg, Whoopi
 – *New York City* Apr 94

- Gould, Stephen Jay
– *New York City* Science V.2
- Grimes, Nikki
– *New York City* Author V.14
- Haley, Alex – *Ithaca* Apr 92
- Hart, Melissa Joan – *Smithtown* Jan 94
- Healy, Bernadine – *Queens* Science V.1
- Holdsclaw, Chamique – *Queens* Sep 00
- Hopper, Grace Murray
– *New York City* Science V.5
- Hughes, Sarah – *Great Neck* Jan 03
- James, Cheryl – *New York City* Apr 95
- Jones, Norah – *New York City* . . PerfArt V.2
- Jordan, Michael – *Brooklyn* Jan 92
- Juster, Norton – *Brooklyn* Author V.14
- Kamler, Kenneth
– *New York City* Science V.6
- Kerr, M.E. – *Auburn* Author V.1
- Konigsburg, E. L.
– *New York City* Author V.3
- Kurzweil, Raymond
– *New York City* Science V.2
- Lee, Jeanette – *Brooklyn* Apr 03
- Lee, Stan – *New York City* Author V.7
- Lemelson, Jerome – *Staten Island* Science V.3
- L'Engle, Madeleine – *New York City* Jan 92; Apr 01
- Leno, Jay – *New Rochelle* Jul 92
- Lewis, Shari – *New York City* Jan 99
- Lipsyte, Robert
– *New York City* Author V.12
- Lisanti, Mariangela – *Bronx* Sep 01
- Lopez, Jennifer – *Bronx* Jan 02
- Lowman, Meg – *Elmira* Science V.4
- Mirra, Dave – *Syracuse* Sep 02
- Mittermeier, Russell A.
– *New York City* WorLdr V.1
- Moses, Grandma – *Greenwich* . . . Artist V.1
- Moss, Cynthia – *Ossining* WorLdr V.3
- Murphy, Eddie – *Brooklyn* PerfArt V.2
- O'Donnell, Rosie – *Commack* Apr 97
- Oppenheimer, J. Robert
– *New York City* Science V.1
- Pascal, Francine
– *New York City* Author V.6
- Peterson, Roger Tory
– *Jamestown* WorLdr V.1
- Pike, Christopher – *Brooklyn* Sep 96
- Powell, Colin – *New York City* Jan 92
- Prelutsky, Jack – *Brooklyn* Author V.2
- Reeve, Christopher – *Manhattan* Jan 97
- Rinaldi, Ann – *New York City* . . . Author V.8
- Ringgold, Faith – *New York City* . Author V.2
- Rockwell, Norman
– *New York City* Artist V.1
- Rodriguez, Alex – *New York City* . . Sport V.6
- Roper, Dee Dee – *New York City* . . . Apr 95
- Sachar, Louis – *East Meadow* . . . Author V.6
- Sagan, Carl – *Brooklyn* Science V.1
- Salinger, J.D. – *New York City* . . Author V.2
- Salk, Jonas – *New York City* Jan 94
- Sealfon, Rebecca – *New York City* . . Sep 97
- Seinfeld, Jerry – *Brooklyn* Oct 92
- Sendak, Maurice – *Brooklyn* Author V.2
- Shakur, Tupac – *Bronx* Apr 97
- Stiles, Julia – *New York City* PerfArt V.2
- Strasser, Todd – *New York City* . . Author V.7
- Tarter, Jill – *Eastchester* Science V.8
- Vidal, Christina – *Queens* PerfArt V.1
- Washington, Denzel – *Mount Vernon* . . Jan 93
- Wayans, Keenen Ivory
– *New York City* Jan 93
- White, E.B. – *Mount Vernon* Author V.1
- Whitman, Meg –
Cold Spring Harbor Sep 03
- WilderBrathwaite, Gloria
– *Brooklyn* Science V.7
- Williams, Garth – *New York City* . Author V.2
- Yolen, Jane – *New York City* Author V.7
- Zindel, Paul – *Staten Island* Author V.1
- New Zealand**
- Hillary, Sir Edmund – *Auckland* Sep 96
- Jackson, Peter – *Pukerua Bay* . . . PerfArt V.2
- Nigeria**
- Olajuwon, Hakeem – *Lagos* Sep 95
- Saro-Wiwa, Ken – *Bori, Rivers State* WorLdr V.1
- North Carolina**
- Bearden, Romare – *Charlotte* Artist V.1
- Burnside, Aubyn – *Hickory* Sep 02
- Byars, Betsy – *Charlotte* Author V.4
- Chavis, Benjamin – *Oxford* Jan 94
- Delany, Bessie – *Raleigh* Sep 99
- Dole, Elizabeth Hanford – *Salisbury* . . Jul 92
- Earnhardt, Dale – *Kannapolis* Apr 01
- Petty, Richard – *Level Cross* Sport V.2
- Williamson, Kevin – *New Bern* . . . Author V.6
- Willingham, Tyrone – *Kinston* Sep 02
- Norway**
- Brundtland, Gro Harlem
– *Baerum* Science V.3

Ohio

- Anderson, Terry – *Lorain* Apr 92
 Battle, Kathleen – *Portsmouth* Jan 93
 Berry, Halle – *Cleveland* Jan 95
 Creech, Sharon – *Mayfield Heights* Author V.5
 Dove, Rita – *Akron* Jan 94
 Draper, Sharon – *Cleveland* Apr 99
 Dunbar, Paul Laurence
 – *Dayton* Author V.8
 Farrell, Suzanne – *Cincinnati* . . . PerfArt V.1
 Glenn, John – *Cambridge* Jan 99
 Guisewite, Cathy – *Dayton* Sep 93
 Haddix, Margaret Peterson
 – *Washington Court House* . . . Author V.11
 Hamilton, Virginia – *Yellow Springs* Author V.1, Author V.12
 Hampton, David Apr 99
 Harbaugh, Jim – *Toledo* Sport V.3
 Holmes, Katie – *Toledo* Jan 00
 Lin, Maya – *Athens* Sep 97
 Lovell, Jim – *Cleveland* Jan 96
 Morrison, Toni – *Lorain* Jan 94
 Nelson, Marilyn – *Cleveland* . . . Author V.13
 Nicklaus, Jack – *Columbus* Sport V.2
 Nielsen, Jerri – *Salem* Science V.7
 Perry, Luke – *Mansfield* Jan 92
 Rose, Pete – *Cincinnati* Jan 92
 Shula, Don – *Grand River* Apr 96
 Spielberg, Steven – *Cincinnati* Jan 94
 Steinem, Gloria – *Toledo* Oct 92
 Stine, R.L. – *Columbus* Apr 94
 Tolan, Stephanie S. – *Canton* . . . Author V.14
 Tompkins, Douglas
 – *Conneaut* WorLdr V.3
 Woodson, Jacqueline
 – *Columbus* Author V.7

Oklahoma

- Brooks, Garth – *Tulsa* Oct 92
 Duke, David – *Tulsa* Apr 92
 Ellison, Ralph – *Oklahoma City* . . Author V.3
 Hanson, Ike – *Tulsa* Jan 98
 Hanson, Taylor – *Tulsa* Jan 98
 Hanson, Zac – *Tulsa* Jan 98
 Hill, Anita – *Morris* Jan 93
 Hillenburg, Stephen – *Fort Sill* . . Author V.14
 Hinton, S.E. – *Tulsa* Author V.1
 Mankiller, Wilma – *Tahlequah* Apr 94
 Mantle, Mickey – *Spavinaw* Jan 96
 McEntire, Reba – *McAlester* Sep 95
 Pitt, Brad – *Shawnee* Sep 98

Oregon

- Cleary, Beverly – *McMinnville* Apr 94
 Engelbart, Douglas – *Portland* . . Science V.5
 Groening, Matt – *Portland* Jan 92
 Harding, Tonya – *Portland* Sep 94
 Hooper, Geoff – *Salem* Jan 94
 Pauling, Linus – *Portland* Jan 95
 Phoenix, River – *Madras* Apr 94
 Schroeder, Pat – *Portland* Jan 97
 Wolff, Virginia Euwer
 – *Portland* Author V.13

Pakistan

- Bhutto, Benazir – *Karachi* Apr 95
 Masih, Iqbal Jan 96

Palestine

- Perlman, Itzhak – *Tel Aviv* Jan 95
 Rabin, Yitzhak – *Jerusalem* Oct 92

Panama

- McCain, John – *Panama Canal Zone* Apr 00

Pennsylvania

- Abbey, Edward – *Indiana* WorLdr V.1
 Alexander, Lloyd – *Philadelphia* . Author V.6
 Anderson, Marian – *Philadelphia* Jan 94
 Armstrong, Robb – *Philadelphia* . . Author V.9
 Berenstain, Jan – *Philadelphia* . . Author V.2
 Berenstain, Stan – *Philadelphia* . Author V.2
 Bradley, Ed – *Philadelphia* Apr 94
 Bryant, Kobe – *Philadelphia* Apr 99
 Calder, Alexander – *Lawnton* Artist V.1
 Carson, Rachel – *Springdale* . . . WorLdr V.1
 Chamberlain, Wilt – *Philadelphia* . . Sport V.4
 Cosby, Bill Jan 92
 DiCamillo, Kate – *Philadelphia* . . Author V.10
 Diemer, Walter – *Philadelphia* Apr 98
 Duncan, Lois – *Philadelphia* Sep 93
 Flake, Sharon – *Philadelphia* . . . Author V.13
 Gantos, Jack – *Mount Pleasant* . . Author V.10
 George, Eddie – *Philadelphia* Sport V.6
 Gingrich, Newt – *Harrisburg* Apr 95
 Griffey, Ken, Jr. – *Donora* Sport V.1
 Iacocca, Lee A. – *Allentown* Jan 92
 Jamison, Judith – *Philadelphia* Jan 96
 Kirkpatrick, Chris – *Clarion* Jan 01
 Lipinski, Tara – *Philadelphia* Apr 98
 Maguire, Martie – *York* PerfArt V.1
 Marino, Dan – *Pittsburgh* Apr 93
 McCary, Michael – *Philadelphia* Jan 96
 McDaniel, Lurlene –
 Philadelphia Author V.14

- Mead, Margaret – *Philadelphia* . Science V.2
 Montana, Joe – *New Eagle* Jan 95
 Morris, Nathan – *Philadelphia* Jan 96
 Morris, Wanya – *Philadelphia* Jan 96
 Pierce, Tamora – *Connellsville* . . Author V.13
 Pinkney, Jerry – *Philadelphia* . . . Author V.2
 Smith, Will – *Philadelphia* Sep 94
 Smyers, Karen – *Corry* Sport V.4
 Stanford, John – *Darby* Sep 99
 Stockman, Shawn – *Philadelphia* Jan 96
 Thomas, Jonathan Taylor
 – *Bethlehem* Apr 95
 Van Meter, Vicki – *Meadville* Jan 95
 Warhol, Andy Artist V.1
 Warrick, Earl – *Butler* Science V.8
 Wilson, August – *Pittsburgh* Author V.4
- Poland**
 John Paul II – *Wadowice* Oct 92
 Opdyke, Irene Gut – *Kozienice* . . Author V.9
 Sabin, Albert – *Bialystok* Science V.1
- Puerto Rico**
 Lopez, Charlotte Apr 94
 Martin, Ricky – *Santurce* Jan 00
 Moseley, Jonny – *San Juan* Sport V.8
 Novello, Antonia – *Fajardo* Apr 92
- Rhode Island**
 Clark, Kelly – *Newport* Sport V.8
 Gilman, Billy – *Westerly* Apr 02
- Romania**
 Dumitriu, Ioana – *Bucharest* . . . Science V.3
 Nechita, Alexandra – *Vaslui* Jan 98
 Risca, Viviana – *Bucharest* Sep 00
- Russia**
 Asimov, Isaac – *Petrovichi* Jul 92
 Chagall, Marc – *Vitebsk* Artist V.1
 Fedorov, Sergei – *Pskov* Apr 94
 Gorbachev, Mikhail – *Privolnoye* Jan 92
 Nevelson, Louise – *Kiev* Artist V.1
 Nureyev, Rudolf Apr 93
 Tartakovsky, Genndy
 – *Moscow* Author V.11
 Yeltsin, Boris – *Butka* Apr 92
- Saudi Arabia**
 bin Laden, Osama – *Riyadh* Apr 02
- Scotland**
 Muir, John – *Dunbar* WorLdr V.3
- Senegal**
 Senghor, Léopold Sédar – *Joal* . . . WorLdr V.2
- Serbia**
 Milosevic, Slobodan – *Pozarevac* Sep 99
 Seles, Monica – *Novi Sad* Jan 96
- Somalia**
 Aidid, Mohammed Farah WorLdr V.2
- South Africa**
 de Klerk, F.W. – *Mayfair* Apr 94
 Mandela, Nelson – *Umtata, Transkei* . . Jan 92
 Mandela, Winnie
 – *Pondoland, Transkei* WorLdr V.2
 Tolkien, J.R.R. – *Bloemfontein* Jan 02
- South Carolina**
 Childress, Alice – *Charleston* . . . Author V.1
 Daniel, Beth – *Charleston* Sport V.1
 Edelman, Marian Wright
 – *Bennettsville* Apr 93
 Garnett, Kevin – *Greenville* Sport V.6
 Gillespie, Dizzy – *Cheraw* Apr 93
 Hunter-Gault, Charlayne
 – *Due West* Jan 00
 Jackson, Jesse – *Greenville* Sep 95
- South Dakota**
 GrandPré, Mary – *Aberdeen* . . . Author V.14
- South Korea**
 An Na Author V.12
 Kim Dae-jung – *Hugwang* Sep 01
 Pak, Se Ri – *Daejeon* Sport V.4
- Spain**
 Domingo, Placido – *Madrid* Sep 95
 Garcia, Sergio – *Castellon* Sport V.7
 Iglesias, Enrique – *Madrid* Jan 03
 Ochoa, Severo – *Luarca* Jan 94
 Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa
 – *Barcelona* Sport V.1
- Sweden**
 Lidstrom, Nicklas – *Vasteras* Sep 03
 Lindgren, Astrid – *Vimmerby* . . Author V.13
 Sorenstam, Annika – *Stockholm* . . . Sport V.6
- Taiwan**
 Ho, David – *Taichung* Science V.6
- Tanzania**
 Nyerere, Julius Kambarage WorLdr V.2
- Tennessee**
 Andrews, Ned – *Oakridge* Sep 94
 Doherty, Shannen – *Memphis* Apr 92
 Fitzhugh, Louise – *Memphis* . . . Author V.3
 Franklin, Aretha – *Memphis* Apr 01
 Hardaway, Anfernee "Penny"
 – *Memphis* Sport V.2
 McKissack, Fredrick L.
 – *Nashville* Author V.3
 McKissack, Patricia C. – *Smyrna* . Author V.3

- Pinkwater, Daniel – *Memphis* . . . Author V.8
 Rowan, Carl T. – *Ravenscroft* Sep 01
 Rudolph, Wilma – *St. Bethlehem* Apr 95
 Summitt, Pat – *Henrietta* Sport V.3
 Timberlake, Justin – *Memphis*. Jan 01
 White, Reggie – *Chattanooga* Jan 98
- Texas**
 Adams, Yolanda – *Houston* Apr 03
 Armstrong, Lance – *Plano* Sep 00
 Baker, James – *Houston*. Oct 92
 Bledel, Alexis – *Houston* Jan 03
 Bush, Laura – *Midland* Apr 03
 Cisneros, Henry – *San Antonio* Sep 93
 Clarkson, Kelly – *Burleson*. Jan 03
 Duff, Hilary – *Houston* Sep 02
 Ellerbee, Linda – *Bryan* Apr 94
 Fiorina, Carly – *Austin* Sep 01
 Groppe, Laura – *Houston* Science V.5
 Harris, Bernard – *Temple* Science V.3
 Hewitt, Jennifer Love – *Waco*. Sep 00
 Hill, Grant – *Dallas*. Sport V.1
 Johnson, Jimmy – *Port Arthur*. Jan 98
 Johnson, Michael – *Dallas* Jan 97
 Jordan, Barbara – *Houston* Apr 96
 Knowles, Beyoncé – *Houston*. Apr 01
 Maddux, Greg – *San Angelo* Sport V.3
 Maines, Natalie – *Lubbock* PerfArt V.1
 Nelly – *Austin* Sep 03
 O'Connor, Sandra Day – *El Paso* Jul 92
 Oliver, Patsy Ruth – *Texarkana*. . WorLdr V.1
 Perot, H. Ross – *Texarkana* Apr 92
 Rodriguez, Eloy – *Edinburg* Science V.2
 Ryan, Nolan – *Refugio*. Oct 92
 Selena – *Lake Jackson*. Jan 96
 Simmons, Ruth – *Grapeland* Sep 02
 Soren, Tabitha – *San Antonio* Jan 97
 Swoopes, Sheryl – *Brownfield* Sport V.2
 Thampy, George – *Houston* Sep 00
 Usher – *Dallas* PerfArt V.1
 Zmeskal, Kim – *Houston* Jan 94
- Tibet**
 Dalai Lama – *Takster, Amdo* Sep 98
- Trinidad**
 Guy, Rosa – *Diego Martin* Author V.9
- Uganda**
 Amin, Idi – *Koboko* WorLdr V.2
- Ukraine**
 Baiul, Oksana – *Dnepropetrovsk*. . . . Apr 95
 Stern, Isaac – *Kreminiec*. PerfArt V.1
- USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics**
 Asimov, Isaac – *Petrovichi, Russia* Jul 92
 Baiul, Oksana – *Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine* Apr 95
 Fedorov, Sergei – *Pskov, Russia* Apr 94
 Gorbachev, Mikhail – *Privolnoye, Russia*. Jan 92
 Nureyev, Rudolf – *Russia*. Apr 93
 Yeltsin, Boris – *Butka, Russia* Apr 92
- Utah**
 Arnold, Roseanne – *Salt Lake City* . . . Oct 92
 Bennett, Olivia – *Salt Lake City* Sep 03
 Jewel – *Payson* Sep 98
 Young, Steve – *Salt Lake City* Jan 94
- Vermont**
 Muldowney, Shirley – *Burlington* . . Sport V.7
- Virginia**
 Armstrong, William H.
 – *Lexington*. Author V.7
 Ashe, Arthur – *Richmond* Sep 93
 Collins, Francis – *Staunton* Science V.6
 Dayne, Ron – *Blacksburg* Apr 00
 Delany, Sadie – *Lynch's Station* Sep 99
 Fitzgerald, Ella – *Newport News* Jan 97
 Hillenbrand, Laura – *Fairfax* . . . Author V.14
 Iverson, Allen – *Hampton* Sport V.7
 Rylant, Cynthia – *Hopewell*. Author V.1
 Vick, Michael – *Newport News* . . . Sport V.9
 White, Ruth – *Whitewood*. Author V.11
- Wales**
 Dahl, Roald – *Llandaff*. Author V.1
- Washington, D.C.**
 Brown, Ron Sep 96
 Chasez, JC. Jan 01
 Chung, Connie. Jan 94
 Danziger, Paula Author V.6
 George, Jean Craighead Author V.3
 Gore, Al Jan 93
 Jackson, Shirley Ann Science V.2
 Nye, Bill Science V.2
 Pinkney, Andrea Davis. Author V.10
 Sampras, Pete Jan 97
 Vasan, Nina Science V.7
 Watterson, Bill Jan 92
- Washington State**
 Card, Orson Scott – *Richland* . . . Author V.14
 Cobain, Kurt – *Aberdeen*. Sep 94
 Devers, Gail – *Seattle* Sport V.2
 Elway, John – *Port Angeles* Sport V.2
 Gates, Bill – *Seattle* Apr 93; Science V.5

PLACES OF BIRTH INDEX

- Jones, Chuck – *Spokane* Author V.12
Larson, Gary – *Tacoma* Author V.1
Murie, Margaret – *Seattle* WorLdr V.1
Ohno, Apolo – *Seattle* Sport V.8
Stockton, John – *Spokane* Sport V.3
- West Virginia**
Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. – *Keyser* Apr 00
Moss, Randy – *Rand* Sport V.4
Myers, Walter Dean
– *Martinsburg* Jan 93
Nash, John Forbes, Jr.
– *Bluefield* Science V.7
- Wisconsin**
Bardeen, John – *Madison* Science V.1
Cray, Seymour – *Chippewa Falls* . Science V.2
Driscoll, Jean – *Milwaukee* Sep 97
Henry, Marguerite – *Milwaukee* Author V.4
Jansen, Dan – *Milwaukee* Apr 94
Nelson, Gaylord – *Clear Lake* . . WorLdr V.3
- O’Keeffe, Georgia – *Sun Prairie* . . Artist V.1
Wilder, Laura Ingalls – *Pepin* . . . Author V.3
Wright, Frank Lloyd
– *Richland Center* Artist V.1
- Wyoming**
MacLachlan, Patricia
– *Cheyenne* Author V.2
- Yugoslavia**
Filipovic, Zlata – *Sarajevo*,
Bosnia-Herzegovina Sep 94
Milosevic, Slobodan – *Pozarevac*,
Serbia Sep 99
Seles, Monica – *Novi Sad, Serbia* Jan 96
- Zaire**
Mobutu Sese Seko – *Lisala* WorLdr V.2
- Zambia**
Kaunda, Kenneth – *Lubwa* WorLdr V.2
- Zimbabwe**
Mugabe, Robert – *Kutama* WorLdr V.2

Birthday Index

January	Year		Year
1 Salinger, J.D.	1919	21 Domingo, Placido	1941
2 Asimov, Isaac	1920	Nicklaus, Jack	1940
3 Fuller, Millard	1935	Olajuwon, Hakeem	1963
Tolkien, J.R.R.	1892	22 Chavis, Benjamin	1948
4 Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds	1933	Ward, Lloyd D.	1949
Runyan, Marla	1969	23 Elion, Gertrude	1918
Shula, Don.	1930	Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber	1974
5 Ocampo, Adriana C.	1955	24 Haddock, Doris (Granny D).....	1910
6 Van Draanen, Wendelin	?	25 Alley, Kirstie	1955
7 Hurston, Zora Neale.	?1891	26 Carter, Vince	1977
Rodriguez, Eloy	1947	Morita, Akio	1921
8 Hawking, Stephen W.	1942	Siskel, Gene.	1946
Spelman, Lucy.	1963	Tarbox, Katie	1982
9 Garcia, Sergio	1980	27 Lester, Julius	1939
McLean, A.J.	1978	Vasan, Nina.	1984
Menchu, Rigoberta	1959	28 Carter, Nick	1980
Nixon, Richard	1913	Fatone, Joey.	1977
11 Leopold, Aldo	1887	Gretzky, Wayne	1961
12 Amanpour, Christiane.	1958	Wood, Elijah	1981
Bezos, Jeff.	1964	29 Abbey, Edward	1927
Lasseter, John	?1957	Gilbert, Sara	1975
Limbaugh, Rush	1951	Hasek, Dominik	1965
13 Burnside, Aubyn	1985	Peet, Bill	1915
Webb, Alan	1983	Winfrey, Oprah	1954
14 Lucid, Shannon	1943	30 Alexander, Lloyd	1924
15 Werbach, Adam	1973	Cheney, Dick	1941
16 Aaliyah	1979	Engelbart, Douglas	1925
Fossey, Dian	1932	31 Collier, Bryan	1967
Lipsyte, Robert	1938	Flannery, Sarah	1982
Tarter, Jill.	1944	Robinson, Jackie	1919
17 Carrey, Jim.	1962	Ryan, Nolan.	1947
Cormier, Robert	1925	Timberlake, Justin	1981
Jones, James Earl.	1931		
Lewis, Shari	?1934	February	Year
Tartakovsky, Genndy	1970	1 Cabot, Meg	1967
18 Ali, Muhammad	1942	Hughes, Langston	1902
Chavez, Julz.	1962	Spinelli, Jerry.	1941
Messier, Mark	1961	Yeltsin, Boris	1931
19 Askins, Renee	1959	2 Shakira	1977
Johnson, John	1918	3 Heimlich, Henry	1920
		Nixon, Joan Lowery	1927
		Rockwell, Norman	1894
		Sanborn, Ryne.	1989

BIRTHDAY INDEX

February (continued)

	Year
4 Parks, Rosa	1913
5 Aaron, Hank	1934
6 Leakey, Mary	1913
Rosa, Emily	1987
Zmeskal, Kim	1976
7 Brooks, Garth	1962
Wang, An	1920
Wilder, Laura Ingalls	1867
8 Grisham, John	1955
9 Love, Susan	1948
10 Konigsburg, E.L.	1930
Norman, Greg	1955
11 Aniston, Jennifer	1969
Brandy	1979
Rowland, Kelly	1981
Yolen, Jane	1939
12 Blume, Judy	1938
Kurzweil, Raymond	1948
Small, David	1945
Woodson, Jacqueline	?1964
13 GrandPré, Mary	1954
Moss, Randy	1977
Sleator, William	1945
15 Groening, Matt	1954
Jagr, Jaromir	1972
Sones, Sonya	1952
Van Dyken, Amy	1973
16 Freeman, Cathy	1973
17 Anderson, Marian	1897
Hargreaves, Alison	1962
Jordan, Michael	1963
18 Morrison, Toni	1931
19 Tan, Amy	1952
20 Adams, Ansel	1902
Barkley, Charles	1963
Cobain, Kurt	1967
Crawford, Cindy	1966
Hernandez, Livan	1975
Littrell, Brian	1975
21 Carpenter, Mary Chapin	1958
Hewitt, Jennifer Love	1979
Jordan, Barbara	1936
Lewis, John	1940
Mugabe, Robert	1924
22 Barrymore, Drew	1975
Fernandez, Lisa	1971
Gorey, Edward	1925
23 Brown, Claude	1937
24 Jobs, Steven	1955
Vernon, Mike	1963
Whitestone, Heather	1973

25 Voigt, Cynthia	1942
26 Thompson, Jenny	1973
27 Clinton, Chelsea	1980
Hunter-Gault, Charlayne	1942
28 Andretti, Mario	1940
Pauling, Linus	1901

March

	Year
1 Ellison, Ralph Waldo	1914
Murie, Olaus J.	1889
Nielsen, Jerri	1952
Rabin, Yitzhak	1922
Zamora, Pedro	1972
2 Gorbachev, Mikhail	1931
Satcher, David	1941
Seuss, Dr.	1904
3 Hooper, Geoff	1979
Joyner-Kersee, Jackie	1962
MacLachlan, Patricia	1938
4 Armstrong, Robb	1962
Morgan, Garrett	1877
5 Margulis, Lynn	1938
6 Ashley, Maurice	1966
7 McCarty, Oseola	1908
8 Prinze, Freddie Jr.	1976
10 Guy, Jasmine	1964
Miller, Shannon	1977
Wolf, Hazel	1898
12 Hamilton, Virginia	1936
Nye, Naomi Shihab	1952
13 Van Meter, Vicki	1982
14 Dayne, Ron	1977
Hanson, Taylor	1983
Jones, Quincy	1933
Williamson, Kevin	1965
15 Ginsburg, Ruth Bader	1933
White, Ruth	1942
16 O'Neal, Shaquille	1972
17 Hamm, Mia	1972
Nureyev, Rudolf	1938
18 Blair, Bonnie	1964
de Klerk, F.W.	1936
Griese, Brian	1975
Queen Latifah	1970
19 Blanchard, Rachel	1976
20 Lee, Spike	1957
Lowry, Lois	1937
Sachar, Louis	1954
21 Gilbert, Walter	1932
O'Donnell, Rosie	1962

March (continued)		Year			
22	Marceau, Marcel	1923	10	Huerta, Dolores	1930
	Shatner, William	1931		Madden, John	1936
23	Kidd, Jason	1973	12	Cleary, Beverly	1916
24	Manning, Peyton	1976		Danes, Claire	1979
25	Dragila, Stacy	1971		Doherty, Shannen	1971
	Franklin, Aretha	1942		Hawk, Tony	1968
	Granato, Cammi	1971		Letterman, David	1947
	Lovell, Jim	1928		Soto, Gary	1952
	Park, Linda Sue	1960	13	Brandis, Jonathan	1976
	Steinem, Gloria	1934		Henry, Marguerite	1902
	Swoopes, Sheryl	1971	14	Collins, Francis	1950
26	Allen, Marcus	1960		Gellar, Sarah Michelle	1977
	Erdős, Paul	1913		Maddux, Greg	1966
	O'Connor, Sandra Day	1930		Rose, Pete	1941
	Stockton, John	1962	15	Martin, Bernard	1954
	Witherspoon, Reese	1976		Watson, Emma	1990
27	Carey, Mariah	1970	16	Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem	1947
	Wrede, Patricia C.	1953		Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia	1984
28	James, Cheryl			Selena	1971
	McEntire, Reba	1955		Williams, Garth	1912
	Stiles, Julia	1981	17	Champagne, Larry III	1985
	Tompkins, Douglas	1943	18	Hart, Melissa Joan	1976
29	Capriati, Jennifer	1976	20	Brundtland, Gro Harlem	1939
30	Dion, Celine	1968	21	Muir, John	1838
	Hammer	1933	22	Levi-Montalcini, Rita	1909
	Jones, Norah	1979		Oppenheimer, J. Robert	1904
31	Caplan, Arthur	1950	23	López, George	1961
	Chavez, Cesar	1927		Watson, Barry	1974
	Gore, Al	1948	24	Clarkson, Kelly	1982
	Howe, Gordie	1928	25	Fitzgerald, Ella	1917
			26	Giff, Patricia Reilly	1935
				Nelson, Marilyn	1946
				Pei, I.M.	1917
April		Year	27	Wilson, August	1945
1	Maathai, Wangari	1940	28	Alba, Jessica	1981
2	Carvey, Dana	1955		Baker, James	1930
3	Bynes, Amanda	1986		Duncan, Lois	1934
	Garth, Jennie	1972		Hussein, Saddam	1937
	Goodall, Jane	1934		Kaunda, Kenneth	1924
	Murphy, Eddie	1961		Lee, Harper	1926
	Street, Picabo	1971		Leno, Jay	1950
4	Angelou, Maya	1928		Lidstrom, Nicklas	1970
	Mirra, Dave	1974	29	Agassi, Andre	1970
5	McDaniel, Lurlene	1944		Earnhardt, Dale	1951
	Peck, Richard	1934		Seinfeld, Jerry	1954
	Powell, Colin	1937	30	Dunst, Kirsten	1982
6	Watson, James D.	1928			
7	Chan, Jackie	1954	May		Year
	Douglas, Marjory Stoneman	1890	2	Hughes, Sarah	1985
	Forman, Michele	1946		Spock, Benjamin	1903
8	Annan, Kofi	1938	4	Bass, Lance	1979
9	Haddix, Margaret Peterson	1964			

BIRTHDAY INDEX

May (continued)

	Year
5 Lionni, Leo	1910
Maxwell, Jody-Anne	1986
Opdyke, Irene Gut	1922
Strasser, Todd	1950
WilderBrathwaite, Gloria	1964
7 Land, Edwin	1909
8 Attenborough, David	1926
Iglesias, Enrique	1975
Meltzer, Milton	1915
9 Bergen, Candice	1946
Yzerman, Steve	1965
10 Cooney, Caroline B.	1947
Curtis, Christopher Paul	1953
Galdikas, Biruté	1946
Jamison, Judith	1944
Ochoa, Ellen	1958
11 Farrakhan, Louis	1933
12 Mowat, Farley	1921
13 Pascal, Francine	1938
Rodman, Dennis	1961
14 Kapell, Dave	1962
Lucas, George	1944
Smith, Emmitt	1969
15 Albright, Madeleine	1937
Almond, David	1951
Hillenbrand, Laura	1967
Johns, Jasper	1930
Zindel, Paul	1936
16 Coville, Bruce	1950
17 Paulsen, Gary	1939
18 John Paul II	1920
19 Brody, Jane	1941
Garnett, Kevin	1976
Hansberry, Lorraine	1930
20 Stewart, Tony	1971
21 Robinson, Mary	1944
22 Ohno, Apolo	1982
23 Bardeen, John	1908
Jewel	1974
O'Dell, Scott	1898
24 Beachley, Layne	1972
Dumars, Joe	1963
Gilman, Billy	1988
26 Hill, Lauryn	1975
Ride, Sally	1951
27 Carson, Rachel	1907
Kerr, M.E.	1927
28 Giuliani, Rudolph	1944
Johnston, Lynn	1947
Shabazz, Betty	1936

29 Clements, Andrew	1949
30 Cohen, Adam Ezra	1979
? McGruder, Aaron	1974

June

	Year
1 Lalas, Alexi	1970
Morissette, Alanis	1974
2 Juster, Norton	1929
4 Kistler, Darci	1964
Nelson, Gaylord	1916
5 Scarry, Richard	1919
6 Rylant, Cynthia	1954
7 Brooks, Gwendolyn	1917
Iverson, Allen	1975
Oleynik, Larisa	1981
8 Berners-Lee, Tim	1955
Bush, Barbara	1925
Davenport, Lindsay	1976
Edelman, Marian Wright	1939
Wayans, Keenen Ivory	1958
Wright, Frank Lloyd	1869
9 Portman, Natalie	1981
10 Frank, Anne	1929
Lipinski, Tara	1982
Sendak, Maurice	1928
Shea, Jim, Jr.	1968
Wilson, Edward O.	1929
11 Cousteau, Jacques	1910
Montana, Joe	1956
12 Bush, George	1924
Rubin, Jamie	1986
13 Allen, Tim	1953
Alvarez, Luis W.	1911
Christo	1935
Nash, John Forbes, Jr.	1928
14 Bourke-White, Margaret	1904
Graf, Steffi	1969
Summitt, Pat	1952
Yep, Laurence	1948
15 Horner, Jack	1946
Jacques, Brian	1939
16 McClintock, Barbara	1902
Shakur, Tupac	1971
17 Gingrich, Newt	1943
Jansen, Dan	1965
Williams, Venus	1980
18 da Silva, Fabiola	1979
Johnson, Angela	1961
Morris, Nathan	1971
Van Allsburg, Chris	1949

June (continued)		Year		
19	Abdul, Paula	1962		Sakic, Joe 1969
	Aung San Suu Kyi	1945		Stachowski, Richie 1985
	Muldowney, Shirley	1940	8	Hardaway, Anfernee "Penny" 1971
20	Goodman, John	1952		Sealfon, Rebecca 1983
	Greenburg, Dan	1936	9	Farmer, Nancy 1941
21	Bhutto, Benazir	1953		Hanks, Tom 1956
	Breathed, Berke	1957		Hassan II 1929
22	Bradley, Ed	1941		Krim, Mathilde 1926
	Daly, Carson	1973		Lee, Jeanette 1971
	Warner, Kurt	1971		Sacks, Oliver 1933
23	Rudolph, Wilma	1940	10	Ashe, Arthur 1943
	Thomas, Clarence	1948		Benson, Mildred 1905
25	Carle, Eric	1929		Boulmerka, Hassiba 1969
	Gibbs, Lois	1951	11	Cisneros, Henry 1947
26	Ammann, Simon	1981		White, E.B. 1899
	Harris, Bernard	1956	12	Bauer, Joan 1951
	Jeter, Derek	1974		Cosby, Bill 1937
	LeMond, Greg	1961		Johnson, Johanna 1983
	Vick, Michael	1980		Yamaguchi, Kristi 1972
27	Babbitt, Bruce	1938	13	Ford, Harrison 1942
	Dunbar, Paul Laurence	1872		Stewart, Patrick 1940
	Perot, H. Ross	1930	15	Aristide, Jean-Bertrand 1953
28	Elway, John	1960		Ventura, Jesse 1951
29	Jiménez, Francisco	1943	16	Johnson, Jimmy 1943
30	Ballard, Robert	1942		Sanders, Barry 1968
			17	An Na 1972
				Stepanek, Mattie 1990
July		Year	18	Diesel, Vin 1967
1	Brower, David	1912		Glenn, John 1921
	Calderone, Mary S.	1904		Lemelson, Jerome 1923
	Diana, Princess of Wales	1961		Mandela, Nelson 1918
	Duke, David	1950	19	Tarvin, Herbert 1985
	Lewis, Carl	1961	20	Hillary, Sir Edmund 1919
	McCully, Emily Arnold	1939	21	Chastain, Brandi 1968
2	Bethe, Hans A.	1906		Hartnett, Josh 1978
	Fox, Vicente	1942		Reno, Janet 1938
	Gantos, Jack	1951		Riley, Dawn 1964
	George, Jean Craighead	1919		Stern, Isaac 1920
	Lynch, Chris	1962		Williams, Robin 1952
	Marshall, Thurgood	1908	22	Calder, Alexander 1898
	Petty, Richard	1937		Dole, Bob 1923
	Thomas, Dave	1932		Hinton, S.E. 1948
3	Simmons, Ruth	1945	23	Haile Selassie 1892
5	Watterson, Bill	1958		Williams, Michelle 1980
6	Bush, George W.	1946	24	Abzug, Bella 1920
	Dalai Lama	1935		Bonds, Barry 1964
	Dumitriu, Ioana	1976		Krone, Julie 1963
7	Chagall, Marc	1887		Lopez, Jennifer 1970
	Heinlein, Robert	1907		Moss, Cynthia 1940
	Kwan, Michelle	1980		Wilson, Mara 1987
	Otto, Sylke	1969	25	Payton, Walter 1954

BIRTHDAY INDEX

July (continued)		Year		Year	
26	Berenstain, Jan	1923	11	Haley, Alex	1921
	Clark, Kelly	1983		Hogan, Hulk	1953
27	Dunlap, Alison	1969		Rowan, Carl T.	1925
	Rodriguez, Alex.	1975		Wozniak, Steve	1950
28	Davis, Jim.	1945	12	Barton, Hazel	1971
	Pottter, Beatrix	1866		Martin, Ann M.	1955
29	Burns, Ken.	1953		McKissack, Fredrick L.	1939
	Creech, Sharon	1945		Myers, Walter Dean	1937
	Dole, Elizabeth Hanford.	1936		Sampras, Pete	1971
	Jennings, Peter	1938	13	Battle, Kathleen.	1948
	Morris, Wanya.	1973		Castro, Fidel	1927
30	Allen, Tori	1988	14	Berry, Halle	?1967
	Hill, Anita	1956		Johnson, Magic	1959
	Moore, Henry	1898		Larson, Gary	1950
	Schroeder, Pat.	1940	15	Affleck, Benjamin.	1972
31	Cronin, John.	1950		Ellerbee, Linda	1944
	Radcliffe, Daniel	1989	16	Bennett, Olivia	1989
	Reid Banks, Lynne	1929		Farrell, Suzanne	1945
	Rowling, J. K.	1965		Fu Mingxia.	1978
	Weinke, Chris	1972		Gayle, Helene	1955
				Robison, Emily	1972
				Thampy, George	1987
August		Year	18	Danziger, Paula.	1944
1	Brown, Ron	1941		Murie, Margaret	1902
	Coolio.	1963	19	Clinton, Bill	1946
	Garcia, Jerry.	1942		Soren, Tabitha	1967
2	Baldwin, James	1924	20	Chung, Connie	1946
	Healy, Bernadine	1944		Dakides, Tara	1975
3	Brady, Tom	1977		Milosevic, Slobodan	1941
	Roper, Dee Dee	?	21	Chamberlain, Wilt	1936
	Savimbi, Jonas.	1934		Draper, Sharon	1952
4	Gordon, Jeff	1971		Hillenburg, Stephen	1961
	Whitman, Meg	1956		Toro, Natalia	1984
5	Córdova, France	1947	22	Bradbury, Ray	1920
	Ewing, Patrick	1962		Dorough, Howie	1973
	Jackson, Shirley Ann	1946		Schwarzkopf, H. Norman	1934
6	Cooney, Barbara	1917	23	Bryant, Kobe.	1978
	Robinson, David	1965		Novello, Antonia.	1944
	Warhol, Andy	?1928		Phoenix, River	1970
7	Byars, Betsy	1928	24	Arafat, Yasir.	1929
	Duchovny, David	1960		Card, Orson Scott	1951
	Leakey, Louis	1903		Dai Qing	1941
	Villa-Komaroff, Lydia.	1947		Ripken, Cal, Jr.	1960
8	Boyd, Candy Dawson.	1946	25	Case, Steve	1958
	Chasez, JC	1976		Wolff, Virginia Euwer	1937
9	Anderson, Gillian	1968	26	Burke, Christopher	1965
	Holdslaw, Chamique	1977		Culkin, Macaulay	1980
	Houston, Whitney	1963		Sabin, Albert	1906
	McKissack, Patricia C.	1944		Teresa, Mother	1910
	Sanders, Deion	1967		Tuttle, Merlin	1941
	Travers, P.L.	?1899			

August (continued)		Year	16	Bledel, Alexis	1981
27	Adams, Yolanda	1961		Dahl, Roald	1916
	Moseley, Jonny	1975		Gates, Henry Louis, Jr.	1950
	Nechita, Alexandra	1985	17	Burger, Warren	1907
	Rinaldi, Ann	1934	18	Armstrong, Lance	1971
28	Dove, Rita	1952		Carson, Ben	1951
	Evans, Janet	1971		de Mille, Agnes	1905
	Peterson, Roger Tory	1908		Fields, Debbi	1956
	Priestley, Jason	1969	19	Nakamura, Leanne	1982
	Rimes, LeAnn	1982		Delany, Sadie	1889
	Twain, Shania	1965	21	Fielder, Cecil	1963
29	Grandin, Temple	1947		Hill, Faith	1967
	Hesse, Karen	1952		Jones, Chuck	1912
	McCain, John	1936		King, Stephen	1947
30	Earle, Sylvia	1935		Nkrumah, Kwame	1909
	Roddick, Andy	1982	22	Richardson, Dot	1961
	Williams, Ted	1918	23	Nevelson, Louise	1899
31	Perlman, Itzhak	1945		Warrick, Earl	1911
September		Year	24	George, Eddie	1973
1	Estefan, Gloria	1958		Ochoa, Severo	1905
	Guy, Rosa	1925	25	Gwaltney, John Langston	1928
	Smyers, Karen	1961		Locklear, Heather	1961
2	Bearden, Romare	?1912		Lopez, Charlotte	1976
	Galeczka, Chris	1981		Pinkney, Andrea Davis	1963
	Lisanti, Mariangela	1983		Pippen, Scottie	1965
	Mohajer, Dineh	1972		Reeve, Christopher	1952
	Yelas, Jay	1965		Smith, Will	1968
3	Delany, Bessie	1891	26	Walters, Barbara	1931
4	Knowles, Beyoncé	1981		Mandela, Winnie	1934
	Wright, Richard	1908		Stockman, Shawn	1972
5	Guisewite, Cathy	1950		Williams, Serena	1981
6	Fiorina, Carly	1954	27	Handford, Martin	1956
7	Lawrence, Jacob	1917		Lavigne, Avril	1984
	Moses, Grandma	1860	28	Cray, Seymour	1925
	Pippig, Uta	1965		Duff, Hilary	1987
	Scurry, Briana	1971		Pak, Se Ri	1977
8	Prelutsky, Jack	1940	29	Berenstain, Stan	1923
	Scieszka, Jon	1954		Guey, Wendy	1983
	Thomas, Jonathan Taylor	1982		Gumbel, Bryant	1948
10	Gould, Stephen Jay	1941	30	Hingis, Martina	1980
	Johnson, Randy	1963		Moceanu, Dominique	1981
12	Yao Ming	1980	October		Year
13	Johnson, Michael	1967	1	Carter, Jimmy	1924
	Monroe, Bill	1911		McGwire, Mark	1963
	Taylor, Mildred D.	1943	2	Leibovitz, Annie	1949
14	Armstrong, William H.	1914	3	Campbell, Neve	1973
	Stanford, John	1938		Herriot, James	1916
15	dePaola, Tomie	1934		Richardson, Kevin	1972
	Marino, Dan	1961		Stefani, Gwen	1969
				Winfield, Dave	1951

BIRTHDAY INDEX

October (continued)		Year		Year	
4	Cushman, Karen	1941	20	Grimes, Nikki	1950
	Kamler, Kenneth	1947		Kenyatta, Jomo	?1891
	Rice, Anne	1941		Mantle, Mickey	1931
5	Fitzhugh, Louise	1928		Pinsky, Robert	1940
	Hill, Grant	1972	21	Gillespie, Dizzy	1956
	Lemieux, Mario	1965		Le Guin, Ursula K.	1929
	Lin, Maya	1959	22	Hanson, Zac	1985
	Roy, Patrick	1965	23	Anderson, Laurie Halse	1961
	Winslet, Kate	1975		Crichton, Michael	1942
6	Bennett, Cherie	1960		Pelé	1940
	Lobo, Rebecca	1973	25	Martinez, Pedro	1971
7	Ma, Yo-Yo	1955		Tolan, Stephanie S.	1942
8	Jackson, Jesse	1941	26	Clinton, Hillary Rodham	1947
	Ringgold, Faith	1930	27	Anderson, Terry	1947
	Stine, R.L.	1943		Morrison, Lillian	1917
	Winans, CeCe	1964	28	Gates, Bill	1955
9	Bryan, Zachery Ty	1981		Roberts, Julia	1967
	Senghor, Léopold Sédar	1906		Romero, John	1967
	Sorenstam, Annika	1970		Salk, Jonas	1914
10	Favre, Brett	1969	29	Flowers, Vonetta	1973
	Saro-Wiwa, Ken	1941		Ryder, Winona	1971
11	Freedman, Russell	1929	31	Candy, John	1950
	Murray, Ty	1969		Jackson, Peter	1961
	Perry, Luke	?1964		Paterson, Katherine	1932
	Young, Steve	1961		Patterson, Ryan	1983
12	Childress, Alice	?1920		Pauley, Jane	1950
	Jones, Marion	1975		Tucker, Chris	1973
	Maguire, Martie	1969			
	Ward, Charlie	1970			
13	Ashanti	1980			
	Carter, Chris	1956			
	Kerrigan, Nancy	1969			
	Rice, Jerry	1962			
14	Daniel, Beth	1956			
	Maines, Natalie	1974			
	Mobutu Sese Seko	1930			
	Usher	1978			
15	Iacocca, Lee A.	1924			
16	Stewart, Kordell	1972			
17	Eminem	1972			
	Jemison, Mae	1956			
	Kirkpatrick, Chris	1971			
18	Bird, Sue	1980			
	Foreman, Dave	1946			
	Marsalis, Wynton	1961			
	Navratilova, Martina	1956			
	Suzuki, Shinichi	1898			
19	Blum, Deborah	1954			
	Pullman, Philip	1946			

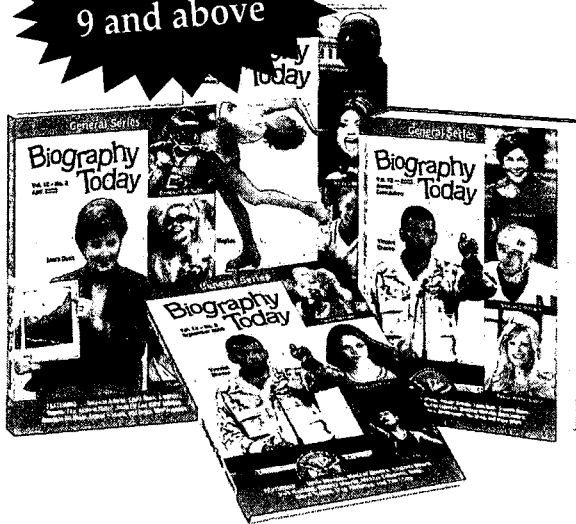
November		Year
2	lang, k.d.	1961
	Nelly	1974
3	Arnold, Roseanne	1952
	Ho, David	1952
	Kiraly, Karch	1960
4	Bush, Laura	1946
	Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy)	1969
	Handler, Ruth	1916
7	Bahrke, Shannon	1980
	Canady, Alexa	1950
8	Mittermeier, Russell A.	1949
9	Denton, Sandi	
	Sagan, Carl	1934
10	Bates, Daisy	?1914
11	Blige, Mary J.	1971
	DiCaprio, Leonardo	1974
	Vonnegut, Kurt	1922
12	Andrews, Ned	1980
	Blackmun, Harry	1908
	Harding, Tonya	1970
	Sosa, Sammy	1968

November (continued)		Year		Year	
13	Goldberg, Whoopi	1949	5	Muniz, Frankie	1985
14	Boutros-Ghali, Boutros	1922	6	Risca, Viviana	1982
	Hussein, King	1935	7	Bird, Larry	1956
	Lindgren, Astrid	1907		Carter, Aaron	1987
	Rice, Condoleezza	1954	8	Rivera, Diego	1886
15	O'Keeffe, Georgia	1887	9	Hopper, Grace Murray	1906
	Pinkwater, Daniel	1941	12	Bialik, Mayim	1975
16	Baiul, Oksana	1977		Frankenthaler, Helen	1928
	Miyamoto, Shigeru	1952		Sinatra, Frank	1915
17	Fuentes, Daisy	1966	13	Fedorov, Sergei	1969
	Hanson, Ike	1980		Pierce, Tamora	1954
18	Driscoll, Jean	1966	14	Jackson, Shirley	1916
	Klug, Chris	1972	15	Aidid, Mohammed Farah	1934
	Mankiller, Wilma	1945		Mendes, Chico	1944
	Vidal, Christina	1981		Taymor, Julie	1952
19	Collins, Eileen	1956	16	Bailey, Donovan	1967
	Devers, Gail	1966		McCary, Michael	1971
	Glover, Savion	1973		Mead, Margaret	1901
	Strug, Kerri	1977	17	Kielburger, Craig	1982
21	Aikman, Troy	1966	18	Aguilera, Christina	1980
	Griffey, Ken, Jr.	1969		Holmes, Katie	1978
	Schwikert, Tasha	1984		Pitt, Brad	1964
	Speare, Elizabeth George	1908		Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa	1971
22	Carmona, Richard	1949		Spielberg, Steven	1947
24	Ndeti, Cosmas	1971	19	Morrison, Sam	1936
25	Grant, Amy	1960		Sapp, Warren	1972
	Mathis, Clint	1976		White, Reggie	1961
	McNabb, Donovan	1976	20	Uchida, Mitsuko	1948
	Thomas, Lewis	1913		Zirkle, Aliy	1969
26	Patrick, Ruth	1907	21	Evert, Chris	1954
	Pine, Elizabeth Michele	1975		Griffith Joyner, Florence	1959
	Schulz, Charles	1922		Stiles, Jackie	1978
27	Nye, Bill	1955		Webb, Karrie	1974
	White, Jaleel	1977	22	Pinkney, Jerry	1939
29	L'Engle, Madeleine	1918	23	Avi	1937
	Lewis, C. S.	1898		Harbaugh, Jim	1963
	Tubman, William V. S.	1895		Lowman, Meg	1953
30	Jackson, Bo	1962	24	Fauci, Anthony S.	1940
	Parks, Gordon	1912		Flake, Sharon	1955
				Lowe, Alex	1958
				Martin, Ricky	1971
			25	Ryan, Pam Muñoz	1951
				Sadat, Anwar	1918
December		Year	26	Butcher, Susan	1954
2	Hendrickson, Sue	1949	27	Roberts, Cokie	1943
	Macaulay, David	1946	28	Lee, Stan	1922
	Seles, Monica	1973		Washington, Denzel	1954
	Spears, Britney	1981	30	Willingham, Tyrone	1953
	Watson, Paul	1950		Woods, Tiger	1975
3	Kim Dae-jung	?1925			
	Filipovic, Zlata	1980			
4	Banks, Tyra	1973			

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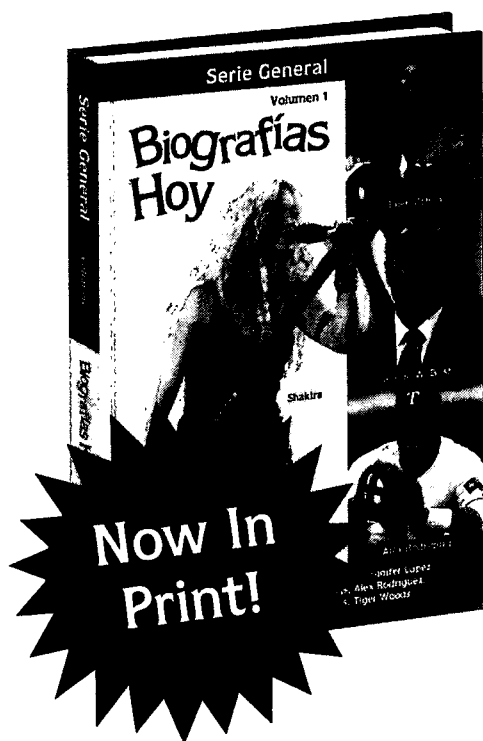
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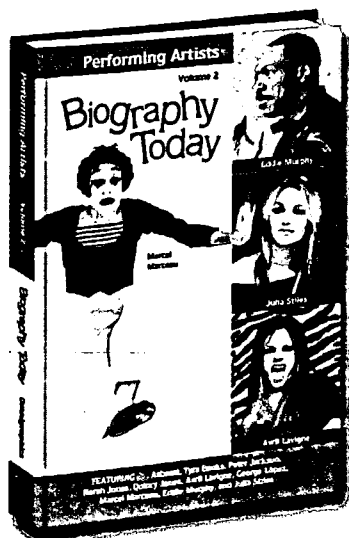
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